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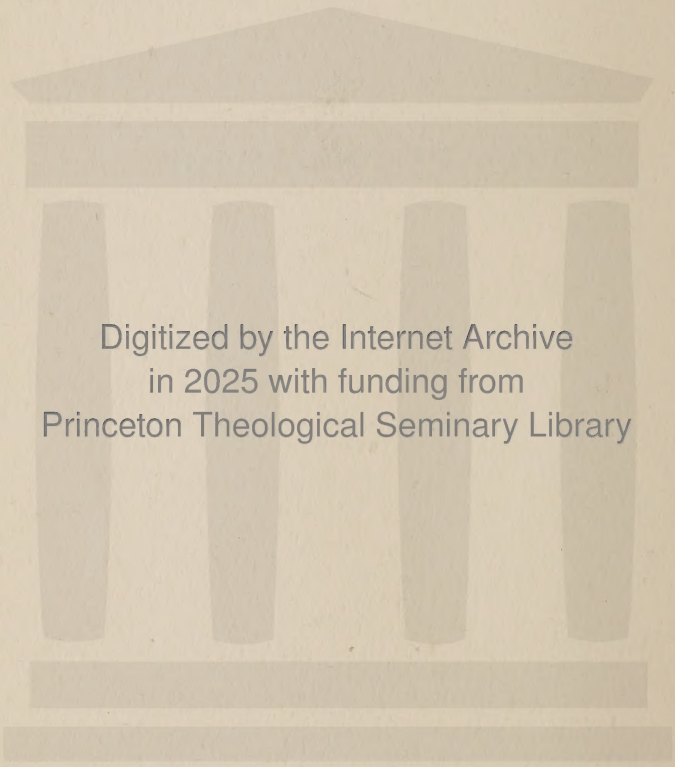
A REALISTIC PHILOSOPHY



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A REALISTIC PHILOSOPHY

The Perennial Principles of Thought and Action in a Changing World

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K. F. REINHARDT, Ph.D.
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To

DR. OSWALDO ROBLES

Executive Head of the Department of Philosophy

at the

National University of Mexico, Mexico, D.F.

Representative of the PHILOSOPHIA PERENNIS among our neighbors south of the Rio Grande

Preface by the General Editor

A philosophy that "is both alive and can be lived" must strike its roots deep into the soil of reality. Such is the author's basic contention.

It must be a philosophy that takes account of the full truth of things and can apply to passing problems the eternal principles; a philosophy called to preserve what is best in the traditions of the past, and yet prepared with equal determination to assume its place in the van of every genuine modern forward movement.

In a single word, it must be a realistic philosophy.

Such, in its ideal development, is the system of thought here espoused, a system combining the truest elements of Greek wisdom with the finest product of the Christian mind. In this book the system is fearlessly applied to the issues that have arisen out of false and godless philosophic principles and which have thrown into cosmic confusion our twentieth century world.

There is no other system of thought in our time that can be said to verify all the essentials of a universal realism. Compared to it, what are the countless conflicting and ephemeral philosophies of our age but broken mirrors, stained, dimmed, and reflecting only confused and isolated fragments of the truth? From a false idealism, repugnant to common sense, on to a hopeless materialism, they alike represent but partial views of that great, magnificent reality of which we all are part and that perpetually encompasses us.

Realism may neither exclude the ideal nor belittle the material. It may be no sketchy and superficial philosophy, singling out one thing only and condemning all the rest to a limbo of nonconsidered things. True realism excludes none of all God's creatures, nor least of all God Himself, their Maker. It acknowledges them alike and all the relations that arise from them.

It recognizes the spiritual as well as the material, the soul no less than the body.

Only a philosophy of realism can ever truly benefit the modern world which false philosophies have thrown into turmoil and confusion.

For men of all denominations or of none, this book will be a valuable guide to a life of intellect and spirit. With prayer and the grace of God all other things can then readily enough be supplied for the needed renewal of rational human life and relations.

If what has been said here may appear polemical, yet such is not the nature of this book. It is rather a positive presentation, making reference incidentally to the various schools and shades of thought, but with a purpose profoundly constructive.

If the opening chapter, on the concept of being, is tensely metaphysical, yet the reader's reward will be proportionately great in the assured hold it provides on the essential and fundamental principles of all clear thinking. In the latter sections particularly of this book abundant practical application will be found to the large human issues of our day with their unhappily multiplied social and economic problems.

Joseph Husslein, S.J., Ph.D.
General Editor, Science and Culture Series
St. Louis University
April 20, 1944

Preface by the Author

This book deals with the basic concept of Reality as such and with the main problems of philosophic realism as embodied in and elaborated by the *philosophia perennis.* The author sees the reason for our uncertainties and confusions in the fact that philosophic realism has been exchanged in our time for unrealistic attitudes in thought and life or for a certain false "realism" which takes account only of some aspects of reality, but loses sight of the whole. Out of these unrealistic attitudes grows the tendency to see things and events in *isolation,* separated from their natural and supernatural context and therefore emptied of their true meaning and significance. Such partial and consequently distorted views of reality are particularly evident in those fields which offer a practical testing ground of philosophic principles, such as, for example, the vast field of moral philosophy, with its subdivisions of political, economic, and educational thought and practice. The author, therefore, pleads for a return to a *total view* of reality, which includes in particular a total view of man and society. And he tries to demonstrate that only a philosophy of integral realism is capable of working out an intellectual and moral synthesis which duly recognizes the essential values of matter and mind, body and soul, sense and intellect, nature and supernature.

Much of the material expounded in the following pages has been the subject of lectures and discussions, conducted by the author under the auspices of the University of California Extension, over a period of about twelve years (1932–1944). The ideas underlying this work of teaching and research are presented here in a new form and in a more systematic arrangement. It is the author's hope that his treatment of many problems of highly controversial character, and of subjects which seem of eminently practical relevance to the professional philosopher and the educated average reader alike, will contribute to some

extent to a better understanding of the tasks of intellectual, moral, and social reconstruction that lie ahead.

A debt of gratitude is due, in the first place, to the Rev. Dr. Joseph Husslein, S.J., the General Editor of the Science and Culture Series, as well as to the publisher of the Series, who suggested the writing of this book and lent their encouragement to its progress and completion. The author furthermore acknowledges his indebtedness to his colleague, Professor B. Q. Morgan of Stanford University, who read both the manuscript and the galley proofs and made many excellent suggestions as to the stylistic and material improvement of the work. The author wishes to extend special thanks to the Very Rev. Joseph Nevins, S.S., President of St. Patrick's Seminary, Menlo Park, California for generously offering library and other facilities; to Rev. R. L. Gratto, S.S., Professor of Philosophy at St. Patrick's Seminary, for much encouragement and pertinent criticism; and to Miss Esther Davies of Stanford University, for material aid in compiling part of the index.

KURT F. REINHARDT, PH.D.

Stanford University, July 31, 1944,
The Feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola.

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Introduction

IT IS a peculiar feature of the present age that individuals and groups in all the countries that comprise what may roughly be termed "Western Civilization" are engaged in an almost frantic search for norms and standards of thought and action. The so-called "totalitarian" nations have attempted in recent decades to build pyramids of uniform and unified social and political structures based on definite anthropological and biological concepts and culminating in such supposed absolutes as "the State," "the people," "the race," or "the classless society" of the emancipated proletariat. The "democracies," on the other hand, challenged in their complacent lassitude by the aggressive violence and the uncompromising determination of these dynamic forces, have been compelled in self-defence to rally their inherent strength by re-examining their own intellectual and moral foundations, in order to meet the great challenge by an equally consistent and conscious reaffirmation of their own root principles. The search for norms and standards is therefore not confined to one side or one party in this clash of several ways of thinking, doing, and living—it is well-nigh universal, and the struggle is waged in the last analysis in behalf of different and indeed essentially irreconcilable ideas concerning the nature and the ultimate destiny of man. An age which, as many had thought, was characterized by crass materialism and a cynical disregard of all absolutistic claims and beliefs, has actually reverted to types of ideological warfare considered peculiar to the more or less remote past.

The search for new absolutes follows upon a period of *laissez faire* in politics, economics, and morals and is nourished by mounting resentment against a society which, while still paying lip service to such traditional values as human liberty and human personality, had gradually lost its understanding

of the true meaning of these values and was already in grave danger of losing its faith in them as well. Intellectual and social deordination were earmarks of a "liberalism" which, owing to its waning faith in any objective and indubitable set of values, lacked motivation, will, and ability to realize in social structures the demands of social justice and to build an organic society in accordance with the order of nature and the dignity of man.

If today's "crisis" were the indication of an ordinary change or transition, if it were merely a question of a shift of emphasis in the scale of values or in the order of allegiances, then the present cataclysm would not be very different from similar crises in the past. Time and time again the Western World has been deeply shaken by violent upheavals and revolutionary transformations, and even the nineteenth century abounds in clashes of conflicting ideas. What makes the present crisis different and perhaps unique is its all-pervasive nature, as well as the radical break with the past which characterizes many of its aspects.

It is hardly open to question that down through the centuries of the "Western Tradition" definite patterns of thought were either inherited and therefore taken for granted or, if at times they were questioned and challenged, this was done with the intent to perfect human nature, to improve human relations, and to promote social and cultural progress. There have been, it is true, thoroughgoing skeptics all along the line, such as the Sophists in ancient Greece, the Nominalists in the Middle Ages, or David Hume in the eighteenth century. But these were either the spokesmen of a sophisticated intelligentsia or they were sturdy individualists of thought. Though their influence, like that of the French Encyclopaedists, was at times considerable, their following was always numerically small, and the peoples of the West as a whole have steadfastly refused to accept any categoric or nihilistic denial of certain criteria of true and false, right and wrong, good and evil.

Not until the nineteenth century were the conditions created for what Hermann Rauschning in our own age has called a "Revolution of Nihilism."[1] What distinguished this most

[1] Hermann Rauschning, *The Revolution of Nihilism* (New York, 1939).

recent form of skepticism from similar intellectual trends of the past was, firstly, that it was associated from the outset with a very positive evaluation of one limited branch of human knowledge, viz., the body of facts gained by the methods employed in the natural sciences; secondly, the alliance between the new skepticism and certain extreme forms of political, economic, and ethical "liberalism" and "laissez faire"; and, thirdly, the absorption of the skeptical attitude by broad masses of the population. While the first two characteristics were, in part at least, historically conditioned, the third has as its principal cause the infiltration of skepticism and relativism into the institutions of learning and their spread through the channels of the modern systems of universal education.

It is obvious that it would be difficult if not an impossible task to arrange the multiform trends of the nineteenth century under any common denominator. And yet, a careful analysis suggests that they all converge in an increasing respect for experimental science, coupled with a decreasing confidence in the time-honored standards and values of the Western Tradition. Many of the publications of recent date that deal with the complex problems of European civilization in past and present echo the almost verbally identical lament that disaster and despair must result from the eclipse of the spiritual heritage of the past.[2] Prophets of gloom joined their voices to those of the enthusiastic apostles of progress, indicting the modern age and confessing the breakdown of a faith in man and reality that had seemed infallibly established in the Western World. The picture which Spengler paints in "The Decline of the West" and the one which unfolds itself in Bernard Shaw's provocative play "Too True to Be Good"[3] betray a similar mood, despite the contrasting intellectual premises of the two authors. And the two messages fall equally short of overcoming pure negation and of offering guiding principles or practical methods to master a crisis the symptoms

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[2] Cf. Mortimer J. Adler, *What Man Has Made of Man* (New York, 1937); Michael de la Bedoyere, *Christian Crisis* (New York, 1942); Nicolai Berdiaev, *The End of Our Time* (New York, 1933); Pitrim Sorokin, *The Crisis of Our Age* (New York, 1942); Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West,* 2 vols. (New York, 1939); W. T. Stace, *The Destiny of Western Man* (New York, 1942).

[3] Bernard Shaw, *Too True to Be Good* (London, 1934).

of which they so admirably describe. When the adventurer Aubrey in Shaw's play — whose father was a fanatical atheist and whose mother was a religious bigot, and who obviously is interpreting Shaw's own ideas for the benefit of readers and audiences — when Aubrey delivers his final sermon, the space surrounding him grows cold and empty. Gradually a dense fog envelops everything in a veil of mystery, finally swallowing even the form and voice of this lonely preacher. His parting words convey the conviction that mere negation cannot satisfy the mind of man, and that a "way of life" must needs be found if all is not to be lost beyond redemption.

Now it is the peculiar privilege of man to formulate such ideas and to arrive at such conclusions as will be conducive to the establishment of a hierarchy of values and therewith to the finding of such a "way of life." Man does not accept passively and without questioning the conditions and situations in which he finds himself: he rather reacts to them actively, either spontaneously or according to some reasoned plan or design. He thereby affirms himself as a being of a special kind. His kinship with inorganic and organic nature notwithstanding, he is alive in his own unique way. He is, potentially at least, a thinking being, a reasoning or "metaphysical" animal, i.e., a being that asks questions and contrives answers concerning the world about him as well as regarding himself, his own nature and existence. He tries to assimilate the world of phenomena by means of cognition, and he expresses and communicates his knowledge by means of speech and language, using grammar and syntax to impart to his communications order and meaning.

To say that man is a thinking or rational animal is to assert that reason is the distinctive mark of human nature, the specific difference which establishes man's rank above minerals, plants, and brutes. It is this conviction of man's prerogatives as a rational creature that of late has become shaky, that has been called in question by professional and amateur philosophers alike, and that has been attacked by new irrational creeds in many lands. But the very way in which such creeds are presented and defended provides in itself additional evidence of man's rational nature. Thus the advocates of the

"new myths"[4] underlying the political and social totalitarian systems in Europe, or of the "twin myths of progress and utility"[5] underlying the collectivist emotionalism of the "progressive" philosophy of education in the United States — they all resort willy-nilly to every imaginable type of rationalization in the attempt to justify their antirational tenets. It seems therefore that man is not merely a reasoning but a rationalizing or philosophizing animal by virtue of the very fact that he cannot escape the necessity of fashioning his life in accordance with definite patterns of thought. His rationality compels him to choose among several philosophical or metaphysical arguments or propositions, arguments which may or may not be in accord with the anthropological structure of his own nature and with the ontological structure of reality. The man who extols emotionalism or "energeticism" or the primacy of the forces of will and instinct, of the race or of the blood, implies in his praise a distinct philosophical and metaphysical conviction, a specific attempt to establish, to displace or to replace certain standards and values, to perform some more or less systematic philosophical valuation, transvaluation, or revaluation.

If it is true then that man cannot escape the implications and consequences of his own thinking, it would seem a counsel of elementary common sense that he cultivate and treasure such an important faculty. Therefore it would seem wise for him to recognize and honor philosophy, that science which involves relations with the impersonal realm of nature as well as with the personal types of being in individual and social life, and with God, the first cause of all being. Philosophy, therefore, seems to be properly defined as the science of the functions and implications of human thought. It may be objected that such a science is of little value because it deals of necessity with various abstract principles whose relation to practical life may not be immediately evident. The objection, however, would only be valid if philosophic wisdom were

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[4] Cf. Alfred Rosenberg, *The Myth of the Twentieth Century* (*Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts*) (München, 1934).

[5] Cf. Robert M. Hutchins, *The Higher Learning in America* (New Haven, 1936). An indictment of these twin myths.

something purely theoretical and self-contained, if theoretical knowledge were not steadily overflowing, so to speak, into practical knowledge, thereby manifesting itself as a creative force, imparting its values not only to the human mind but to human acts as well.

Philosophy rightly understood, therefore, is not only a basic theoretical discipline but also an eminently practical science, exercising its ordering and regulating function in relating thought to action and in unifying both. It is the misunderstanding of the nature of philosophy and its function in the history of human thought that has led to numerous overstatements and understatements concerning the value of philosophy as a rational science. An overemphasis on abstract theoretical thought is apt to lead to the loss of close contact with the practical side of life, while the exclusive preoccupation with practical and utilitarian ends may obstruct the apprehension of intellectual and moral principles. The history of Western thought offers examples of both types of aberration. Extreme philosophic rationalism appears as a rule to be accompanied or followed either by certain types of "actionism" or by various degrees of skepticism. Periods of philosophical inflation seem to alternate with periods of philosophical deflation. Overconfidence in the capacities of human reason finds itself almost inevitably challenged by a flat rejection of reason as a valid instrument of knowledge.

Thus, in antiquity the rationalism of Socrates gave rise to the skepticism of the Sophists; in the Middle Ages the rationalism of decaying scholasticism was opposed by the nominalism of William of Occam and the fideism* of Martin Luther, the former despairing of the ability of human reason to establish criteria of true and false, of good and evil, and the latter denouncing reason as "a whore," but both finding one sole anchor of certitude in the subjective testimony of the individual conscience. Again, the rationalism of Descartes was challenged by the skepticism of Pierre Bayle (1647–1706) and the French Encyclopaedists and by the fideism of Blaise Pascal (1623–62) and the Jansenists of Port Royal. In the course of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century the rationalist "idealism" of the followers of Kant and Hegel engendered on the one hand

* See Glossary for this and other scientific terms.

the antirational and antimetaphysical "scientism" of Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, and a host of recent representatives of pragmatism, behaviorism, and "logical empiricism" — all more or less faithful disciples of the "positivism" of their two masters — while on the other hand the same rationalism invited another fideist reaction in the form of Schleiermacher's and Kierkegaard's (1813–55) irrationalist theology and that of their present-day followers. Kierkegaard's influence, in particular, is very much in evidence in the "dialectical theology" of Karl Barth and his school, an influence which today extends far beyond the boundaries of Denmark, Switzerland, and Germany, the native lands of the "dialectical theologians."[6] Irrationalist reactions of a different kind and, to be sure, on a different level are the contemporary "wind-and-will" philosophies of violent actionism and dynamic energeticism (fascism, national-socialism, etc.), in which the telluric forces of race, blood, and instinct revolt against the lifeless abstractions and rationalizations of armchair philosophers.

Carried forward to this point, an analysis of the human search for knowledge seems to suggest that two pitfalls must be avoided if the genuine philosophical quest is not to be frustrated or at least seriously impeded: (1) a supposed self-sufficiency and omnipotence of thought, which is in danger of resulting in empty abstraction and lifeless dialectics; and (2) a refusal to acknowledge the validity of rational operations and demonstrations, which in all likelihood is bound to issue in listless "scientism" or sterile skepticism. When theoretical wisdom tries to cut itself loose from actual experience and factual observation, it becomes unreal, and the same is true of practical wisdom or scientific knowledge when it rejects or

[6] "Dialectical Theology" stresses the "infinite qualitative difference" between creature and Creator, the absolute transcendence of God as against a fallen and corrupted world and nature (Luther). Such a theology not only implies the devaluation of the natural faculty of human reason but also denies the possibility of a "natural theology" or theodicy. All human predications concerning the Deity are actually regarded as blasphemous. The contents of faith and revelation are purely irrational and paradoxical and can be expressed in human terms only by seemingly self-contradictory ("dialectical") affirmative and negative ("yes" and "no") statements.

Cf. Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans* (London, 1933); *The Doctrine of the Word of God* (Edinburgh, 1936); *Credo* (New York, 1936); *Church and State* (London, 1939); *The Church and the Political Problem of Our Day* (New York, 1939); also the works of F. Gogarten, W. Thurneysen, and E. Brunner, most of them only available in German.

disregards the normative functions of a philosophical evaluation of scientific facts and practical situations. In other words, wisdom without science is barren and science without wisdom is dangerous. Both the extreme rationalist and the extreme empiricist seem to underrate or overlook entirely an essential section of reality, and therefore sooner or later they find themselves involved in insurmountable difficulties. Rationalist idealism in its various forms inclines toward the denial of the value of practical experience, toward the denial of the reality of that which is concrete and individual, and toward the depreciation of matter. It feels tempted to reject in part or in toto the evidence furnished by sense perception, to regard as real only that which is mental or universal, and to treat extra-mental phenomena as illusions. A purely empiricist and materialist science, on the other hand, will try to reduce all reality to measurable quantities. It will distrust the evidence furnished by intellectual perception and is prone to attribute reality only to the concrete and particular, and to regard all intellectual and spiritual reality as illusory. While extreme rationalism and idealism fail to provide a satisfactory explanation of the phenomena of change, extreme empiricism and materialism fail to offer a satisfactory explanation of those enduring qualities and aspects of reality that underlie all change. Both views, therefore, are construed upon an incomplete understanding of the nature of reality.

The one-sidedness of such fragmentary views of life in general, and of life on the human level in particular, is very conspicuous in the two major branches of modern philosophy which grew out of the disintegration of the systematic speculation of the medieval schools. Medieval thought, which in the thirteenth century had achieved a magnificent synthesis of the dialectical claims of nature and supernature, sense and intellect, reason and faith, in the philosophical "Summae" of St. Albert the Great and St. Thomas Aquinas, found it increasingly difficult to cope with the tremendous transformations which resulted from the expansion of man's physical and intellectual view of the universe in the age of the Renaissance. In every department of civilization, in theology and philosophy, in faith and morals as well as in politics and economics, in science and education, in literature and in the arts, the symptoms of a

spiritual and cultural crisis multiplied as the West traversed the span of time stretching from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century. The stable order of the God-centered "Sacred Empire" of the medieval Commonwealth of Nations, resting upon the twin pillars of the unquestioned authority of Emperor and Pope, was shaken to its foundations by the onrushing forces of Humanism, Renaissance, and Reformation, by the impact of new discoveries and inventions, by new trends in speculative thought and new methods in the inductive sciences. Even in the fourteenth century William of Occam († 1349), the excommunicated Franciscan Friar, had proclaimed that a proposition might be philosophically true and theologically false and vice versa (doctrine of the "double truth") and had thereby encouraged distrust in the objectivity of eternal verities. Moreover, with his denial of the principle of causality he had anticipated Hume's skepticism and Kant's criticism and had, at least by implication, rejected the idea of finality or the belief in a teleological universe of causes, means, and ends.

If there were no eternal verities or universal truths, where was certainty to be found? Two different and mutually exclusive answers to this question had been given by philosophical thought. Descartes (1596–1650), the rationalist, found certitude in the subjectivity of his mind and conscience (*cogito, ergo sum:* I think, therefore I am), and he made this certainty the starting point and cornerstone of his philosophy; Francis Bacon (1561–1626), the empiricist, found it in physical nature, in the experimental exploration of the laws of the universe, and hence in the newly developing science of mechanical physics.

Thus, when at the beginning of modern times the mighty river of human thought divided into two streams — rationalistic and critical philosophy on the one hand, experimental philosophy and empirical science on the other — the once imposing edifice of medieval scholasticism had already crumbled. It was no longer a vital force, but could only be called "scholastic" in that derogatory sense in which the term was used by the representatives of both the rationalist and empiricist modes of thought, and which, owing to an unjust and unhistorical generalization, has remained associated with it in large measure to this day. The treasures of the medieval philosophical synthesis were buried in commentaries and textbooks, and the

creative intellectual effort and broad vision of the great medieval thinkers gave way to ultraconservatism and to the academic subtleties or the standardizations of second-rate scholars and teachers, who made a fetish of tradition and worshiped defunct authorities. When, after two centuries of decline, scholastic thought recovered some of its former vigor in the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the systems of modern philosophy had emancipated themselves to such a degree that an almost unbridgeable gulf separated them from the spiritual heritage of their scholastic contemporaries. Not only the philosophical interests and problems but also the linguistic and terminological patterns had undergone such radical changes that a mutual understanding and rapprochement between the old and new schools and systems of thought was rendered extremely difficult.

It seems that in the incubation period of modern philosophy most of the truly creative thinkers felt themselves intrigued by the new vistas of speculation, and it is therefore not surprising that both rationalism and empiricism captivated many illustrious minds. Rationalism followed the road marked by Descartes, Malebranche, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant, and Hegel. The beginnings of empiricism are usually associated with the keen speculation of the Franciscan Friar, Roger Bacon (1214–1294), the "Doctor Mirabilis," who was one of the most advanced thinkers of his age and is credited with a large number of scientific discoveries. He was an Oxford scholar, and most of the distinguished representatives of empiristic philosophy, such as Francis Bacon, Hobbes, Hume, Herbert Spencer, John Stuart Mill, are likewise Anglo-Saxons.

Rationalism, following its innate bent, culminated in the extreme idealism of Hegel, who confined reality exclusively to the mind and consistently maintained that everything that is rational is real and everything that is real is rational. Empiricism, no less loyal to its inherent premises, issued in the nineteenth century in the "positive philosophy" of Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer and reached its climax in our own time in the laboratory of the behaviorist, for whom all human thought, reduced to stimulus and response, must be interpreted in the terms of physical science. The positivist insistence on "scientific impartiality" implies in the last analy-

sis a complete indifference to qualitative distinctions of an intellectual and moral kind and consequently demands the wholesale rejection of all the traditional forms and values of thought and morals, which are regarded either as infantile conceptions or as pathological aberrations. In its most recent form, the "logical empiricism" and "semanticism" of the Vienna School (Carnap, Reichenbach, Schlick, etc.)[7] positivism has invaded the precincts of American education, challenging philosophy not only in its own field but, on a broader scale, in its dominant significance as a liberal art and as a basic discipline in a liberal arts curriculum.

It is the contention of the "logical positivist" that only what can be tested in the laboratories of the physical sciences has any meaning at all. He therefore demands that every type of being and reality be reduced to and expressed in sensori-mathematical symbols. He distrusts the rational operations commonly associated with the human mind and describes them as tautological tricks. The task which is in the end reserved for the intellect, to save it from total and permanent unemployment, is the compilation and transformation of mathematical signs and symbols.

In "logical positivism" (empiricism) we have then the extreme empiricist reaction against a philosophy and metaphysics whose integral rationalism had caused their gradual estrangement from life and their hostility toward physical science. But one one-sidedness is usually as bad as another, and therefore what was meant as a remedy turned out to be something quite different: "logical positivism" actually encouraged the forces of intellectual and moral nihilism, and thus in turn threatened to issue in the self-destruction of philosophy as a rational discipline.

It is true that Kant (1724–1804) and after him Comte (1798–1857) attempted a synthesis of the dogmatic assertions of rationalism and empiricism, but neither Kant's "transcendental idealism" nor Comte's "humanism" could escape the consequences of that rationalist-empiricist dualism which was the fatal bequest of the fathers of modern philosophy;

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[7] Cf. Carnap, Rudolf, *The Logical Syntax of Language* (London, 1937); *The Unity of Science* (London, 1934) — Reichenbach, Hans, *Experience and Prediction* (Chicago, 1938) — Schlick, Moritz, *Problems of Ethics* (New York, 1939).

it had been glaringly evident in Descartes' (1596–1650) description of man as consisting of pure spirit and pure geometrical extension, an angelic mind mysteriously juxtaposed with a mechanico-physical body. For Kant the synthesis was frustrated by the fact that he overstated the mind's share in the constitution of reality and therefore tried to explain the world of phenomena as depending for its existence on the organizing constitutional forms and categories of the understanding (*Verstand*). For Comte the aspired goal was missed because physical reality was declared to be the sum total of being, and knowledge was confined to the experimentally knowable. Comte's new "religion of humanity" was a logically unwarranted digression from his original intentions, inspired by love and by the desire to achieve a new cultural and social unity on a scientific basis.

It seems that there exists a law of equilibrium in thought and life which exacts retribution whenever it is violated, "the truth being that the excessive increase of anything often causes a reaction in the opposite direction; and this is the case not only in the seasons and in vegetable and animal life, but above all in forms of government."[8] When Plato wrote these lines, he tried to explain how an excessive amount of liberty may directly issue into an excess of slavery, but his observation may well be generalized, and a realization of its fundamental veracity may be found in the dialectical triad (thesis — antithesis — synthesis) of Hegel's (1770–1831) philosophy of history, in Karl Marx's (1818–1883) dialectic of the class struggle (capital — labor — classless society; "expropriation of the expropriators"), and more recently in P. Sorokin's attempt to explain radical changes in the systems and values of art, truth, morals, and culture by means of a similar triadic dialectic (ideational — ideal — sensate).[9] The reaction in each case results from the fact that a partial truth or a fragmentary aspect of reality is overstated to such an extent that it eventuates in distortion and even falsehood, thereby refuting itself and leading to a contrary overstatement. Thus an integral spiritualism may elicit an integral materialism; or a rigorous

[8] Plato, *Republic VIII,* Jowett's trans., vol. II, p. 822 (New York: Random House, 1937).

[9] Pitrim Sorokin, *Cultural and Social Dynamics,* 4 vols. (New York, 1937–40); *The Crisis of Our Age* (New York, 1942).

moralism and asceticism may turn into immoralism and libertinism. And this process may have to go on until the initial error is rectified, the equilibrium restored, and the intrinsic laws of reality honored and sanctioned.

An age such as ours, beset with the vexation of wars and revolutions, confronted with novel tasks in domestic and international relations, in government and administration, in the conduct of public and private affairs, an age that is engaged in experiments and readjustments in the distribution of wealth and property, in the broad field of education, and in the narrower circles of group and family life — such an age seems to be called upon to seek and find its "best guardian" in philosophy "who," we are told, "comes and takes her abode in a man, and is the only savior of his virtue throughout life."[10] This, too, to be sure is an overstatement, leaving out religion. And yet, as in past ages, philosophy may once more become in no slight measure a guide for the intellectually and morally homeless, whether they be individuals or groups or multitudes. Having been rudely torn from the stability of traditions and conventions, we feel inclined to reflect more profoundly on the meaning of individual and social life.

But if philosophy is to make a vital contribution to the reestablishment of order and direction in human life and in the several departments of civilization, it must vindicate and justify itself as a trustworthy guide by avoiding the extreme and unrealistic attitudes just characterized, and by respecting in its beginning, in its progress, and in its end the laws and proportions of reality. To be trustworthy, philosophy must have its roots deeply and firmly in reality. To claim the allegiance of man, the rational animal, it must be true in the sense that it will have to be as broad, comprehensive, and enduring as the eternal laws of being, and yet sufficiently flexible and dynamic to apprehend, appraise, and understand the phenomena of flux and change.

If such be the nature of what may be called a sound philosophy, much evidently depends on the point of departure or on the principles which are to guide and inform human thought and action. No amount of activity, energy, or enthusiasm can atone for initial errors in the philosophical prem-

[10] Plato, *Republic*, cit., p. 807.

ises. The violated sanctions of being will sooner or later exact vengeance, and the initial fallacy in the premises will have to be rectified by the arduous lessons of actual experience.

This latter consideration serves to focus our attention once more on the importance of a proper view of nature and life in general and of an adequate definition of human nature in particular. Man, the philosopher, is the subject as well as the object of the philosophy that he chooses as his guide. The truths and values which the human mind discovers in regard to its own being and in regard to other types and aspects of being determine man's view of reality as a whole. The order of values thus apprehended will in turn serve as a pattern for man's life as an individual and social being. The individual's view of himself and of his surrounding world will thus emerge as the sum total of observed facts and actual experiences on the one hand, and of the utilization of the mental faculties of abstraction on the other. This sum total will be more or less integrated and complete, or more or less fragmentary, deficient, or distorted, in proportion to the circumference of reality actually apprehended, properly evaluated, and rationally understood.

Now man, especially in time of tribulation, feels naturally inclined to ask: "what shall I do?," although, philosophically speaking, this question ought to have been preceded by another and more fundamental one. In order to learn what to do in any particular predicament or in any number of situations, it is first of all necessary to know what kind of a being man is. In other words, the norms which are to guide human acts will follow from the definition of man. This definition will suggest and eventually decide what every man can do, should do, and should not do. Expressed in philosophical terminology, this means that ethics (the science of human acts) is based on and derived from metaphysics (the science of being). It may be said that at any given time civilization bears of necessity the imprint of the then prevalent idea of man. Civilization changes its entire physiognomy according as man is defined with Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas as a rational animal, or with Epicurus (341–270 B.C.) and Spengler (1880–1936) as a brute or beast of prey, or with Descartes as part angel and part machine, or with Lamettrie (1709–1751) and Holbach

(1723–1789) as a mere machine, or with Nietzsche (1844–1900) as a superman and demi-god. But no matter what kind of a world is built around these or yet other definitions of man, it is always man, the rational animal, whether acknowledging or disavowing his rationality, who builds these worlds and who therefore has to bear what Balduin Schwarz calls "the burden of consequences."[11] The German author sees in this burden the dominant feature of the present age, the source of both gloom and hopefulness. "For since the consequences appear as chaos, the radical abandonment of the original errors has become easier than it was in times when one could still nourish illusions as to the nature of the consequences."[12]

This abandonment of the original errors, however, involves all the resolute determination and all the responsibility of man, i.e., of a being endowed and burdened not only with rationality but also with the faculty of choice, a faculty which relates to both premises and consequences. To be rational and to be free are two privileges and two responsibilities which philosophy shares with the person in whom it originates. And philosophy avails itself of these privileges and discharges these responsibilities if it takes reality as its guide and fashions its principles and premises in accordance with the ontological structure of the spiritual and material universe, so that the degrees of knowledge will be proportioned to the degrees of being. In this way a hierarchy of sciences will be established which is derived from the graduated order of life itself, spanning the entire breadth between matter and spirit. In such a graduated order each particular science and each particular aspect of reality will receive its due, and none of the sciences will encroach upon a mode of knowledge which transcends its proper sphere, and for which by its very nature it lacks equipment and method. And thus the quarrel between the natural sciences and philosophy will be amicably settled, the former dealing with proximate causes and the lowest degrees of abstraction, the latter dealing with remote and ultimate

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[11] Balduin Schwarz, *Ewige Philosophie. Gesetz und Freiheit in der Geistesgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1937), pp. 199 sq.

[12] B. Schwarz, *loc. cit.*: *"Denn da die Konsequenzen das Chaos sind, ist der Schritt zum vollständigen Heraustreten aus den ursprünglichen Fehlern grundsätzlich leichter möglich als in den Zeiten, wo man sich noch über die Art der Konsequenzen in Illusionen wiegen konnte."*

causes and the higher degrees of abstraction; but both forms of knowledge are engaged, albeit from different aspects, in the unrelenting search for the selfsame truth.[13]

It should be remembered that for many of the greatest among the scientists and philosophers of the past such quarrels and jealousies between the natural sciences and philosophy, between factual observation and speculation, did not exist and were not even conceivable. In ancient Greece the science of nature was closely linked to philosophical thought. The major works of Aristotle (384–322 B.C.) dealt with physics, ethics, and metaphysics. In the Middle Ages, St. Albert the Great (1193–1280), the "Doctor Universalis," was a careful observer of nature and a master of speculative thought. In modern times, Spinoza (1632–1677), in writing his "Ethics," adopted the method of geometry (*more geometrico*). Both Descartes and Leibniz (1646–1716) are listed as philosophers and mathematicians. These and other thinkers of similar influence tried more or less successfully to avoid partial and partisan views; they regarded scientific and philosophic truth as branches of the same tree of reality.

There was, we may infer, in some of the greatest of scientists and philosophers an acute awareness of the moral blindness of a science that is divorced from philosophic principles, and of the moral lameness of a speculation that is divorced from life. In their attempt to achieve some sort of totality in their world view and in their devotion to the paramount values of thought and life, they proved themselves witnesses to that ancient philosophic tradition which has ever been searching for the abiding truth in the changing conditions

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[13] According to Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas the three supreme sciences, corresponding to three degrees of abstraction, are, in the ascending order, physics, mathematics, and metaphysics. "The mind may . . . limit itself to the consideration of material things . . . experimentally observable. This would give the science of physics. The object of the mind cannot *exist* without sensible matter, but it can be *conceived* without it, for nothing sensible enters into the definition of a cube root. This second degree of abstraction which concerns itself only with quantity, number, and extent, quite apart from their sensible manifestation in material things, is the science of mathematics. Finally, the mind can concern itself with things not inasmuch as they are quantitative but only inasmuch as they are or have *being*, for there are certain objects of knowledge which cannot only be *conceived* without matter, but which can also *exist* without matter, such as truth. This science which concerns itself with *being* as *being* is the science of metaphysics, and belongs to the third degree of abstraction." — Fulton J. Sheen, *Philosophy of Science* (Milwaukee, 1934), pp. 103 sq.

and situations of time and place, and which was ever intent upon making philosophy more than a fascinating intellectual game or gamble and upon making science more than an encyclopaedic knowledge of facts and sense data. In this way and in this way only they were able to vitalize philosophy and to humanize science.

A philosophy such as was conceived and cultivated by these synthetic thinkers may truly be called "eternal" or "perennial," in that its validity and truth content is not confined to any particular age or civilization but is absolute and enduring. The term "philosophia perennis" was first used in this sense by Leibniz, in whose correspondence we find the following passage: "Truth is more widespread than one would think, but too often it is . . . veiled and weakened, mutilated and corrupted by additions which distort it and render it less useful. By making visible these traces of truth in the ancients, or, speaking more generally, in our precursors, one would draw gold from the earth, diamonds out of their mines, and light out of darkness, and this in effect would yield a kind of perennial philosophy (*perennis quaedam philosophia*)."[14]

This "philosophia perennis," which has been variously named "perennial," "permanent" (Chesterton), and "eternal" (Balduin Schwarz), is as old and as new as philosophical speculation itself. It reached its first culminating point at the height of Greek thought, in the works of Plato and Aristotle. With an added religious and aesthetic flavor it was handed on to the Christian Middle Ages by Plotinus (203–269), the neo-platonists, and St. Augustine (354–430); it became resplendent in the works of the medieval Schoolmen and especially in the imposing system of St. Thomas Aquinas. While, as we had occasion to observe, the idea of a "perennial philosophy" was subsequently upheld and even enriched by individual thinkers, the continuity of the established philosophical tradition of the West was broken on the one hand by the temporary stagnation of scholastic thought and, on the other, by the multiple divisions and one-sided systems and propositions of post-Renaissance philosophy.

Today it has become customary to associate the term "per-

[14] Letter addressed to Remond (1714); cf. Leibniz, *Philosophische Schriften*, ed. Gerhardt, III. B. (1887), pp. 424 sq.

ennial philosophy" with the thought content and the proposed solutions of the so-called "Thomistic" tradition, i.e., with that synthetic digest of Greek and Christian philosophy that was embodied in the works of St. Albert the Great, St. Thomas Aquinas, and some of their contemporaries and followers, as well as with certain trends in contemporary philosophy that show a marked affinity with "Thomism." This definite fixation of the meaning of the term dates from the time of the publication of Pope Leo XIII's Encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879), a document which inaugurated the "neo-scholastic" or "neo-thomistic" movement, calling upon Catholic scholars and teachers to meet the many problems and challenges of the modern age by a return to the principles of the *philosophia perennis.*

We shall have occasion to expound these principles in detail. It may therefore suffice here to point out some of the characteristic marks of a philosophy which lays claim to the epithet "eternal." As to its content and object, it may be said that the "philosophia perennis" is concerned with the ever changing aspects of the one unchangeable and immutable Truth, a truth which is much older than antiquity and much newer than modernity, being, as it were, independent of time and place and likewise independent of how much or how little of it may be known at any given moment. Because this truth embraces permanence and change, it is of necessity both static and dynamic, its static nature being expressed in the metaphysical and moral law and order of reality, and its dynamism manifesting itself in its capacity to present, without changing its essence, ever new and different aspects to the searching human mind. "It seems to be natural to human reason," wrote St. Thomas Aquinas, "to proceed step by step from the imperfect to the perfect. And thus we observe in the speculative sciences that those who philosophized in early times handed on something imperfect which, later on, by their successors was transmitted in a more perfect form."[15] These words contain in essence the program which Leo XIII recommended for the renewal of scholastic studies. Philosophy was to regain its health and vigor by re-establishing a happy balance between arid traditionalism and impatient progressivism. *Vetera*

[15] *Summa Theologica*, I–II,ae q. 97, a. 1.

novis augere et perficere (to augment and perfect the old by means of the new) was the formula which Pope Leo had used in his Encyclical Letter. Philosophy was to look upon the methods and achievements of modern science critically but without bias, acknowledging and appropriating gratefully whatever could contribute to the true progress and perfection of man and his civilization. "We hold," the Pope had written, "that every word of wisdom, every useful thing by whomsoever discovered or planned, ought to be received with a willing and grateful mind."

With the full weight of his authority, Leo XIII encouraged and supported the efforts that were crowned by the opening of the *Institut Supérieur de Philosophie* or *Ecole Saint Thomas d'Aquin* (1889) at the University of Louvain, which was to become the center of neo-thomistic learning and research, and whose founder and director was the great Belgian scholar and Cardinal, Mercier (1851–1926). The *Institut* of Louvain was the first and foremost among several similar institutions on the European continent and in the Western Hemisphere. In the New World the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies in Toronto, Canada, founded as a graduate school in 1929 and endowed with the special canonical privileges of a Papal University in 1939, is on the way to become an American Louvain. As the Institute, from its modest beginnings as a liberal arts college in 1881, was affiliated with the University of Toronto, some of its professors, among them several of the most distinguished representatives of neo-thomism, are at the same time members of the Graduate School of the University.

Cardinal Mercier's great ambition to bring about the reconciliation of modern thought and "perennial philosophy" was shared by a number of philosophers in several lands, some of them demonstrating in their own works the possibility of such a reconciliation. Jacques Maritain, the Frenchman, probably the most prolific neo-thomistic author of today and perhaps the most profound contemporary interpreter of the "eternal philosophy," had acquired a thorough mastery of modern philosophy and was equally well versed in the problems and in the methodology of the natural sciences when his first decisive encounter with the "philosophia perennis" occurred. Etienne Gilson, Maritain's fellow country-

man, and like him now a resident of the United States, the author of the renowned Gifford Lectures on "The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy" and of numerous other books dealing for the most part with various historic aspects and problems of the "perennial" tradition, shows an equally intimate familiarity with the philosophical speculation of the most divergent authors and schools. Again, Theodor Haecker, the German, who at one time felt at home in the labyrinths of Hegel's dialectics and Kierkegaard's paradoxes, was able to work his way through these complexities to the eternal wellsprings of philosophic thought. And he never tired of acknowledging his debt of gratitude to those thinkers who, though they had retarded his progress, had quickened his mind and broadened his view. These examples could easily be multiplied.

As to the attitude and method that befits the disciple of the "philosophia perennis" in regard to individual philosophers and different systems of thought, St. Thomas Aquinas himself has spoken his mind very plainly.[16] As the first requisite he demands gratitude to one's intellectual ancestors and precursors, from whose work and even from whose errors inspiration and guidance may be derived. It is necessary, he further enjoins, to listen to many voices and to get acquainted with many modes of thought in order to be able to distinguish truth from falsehood and thus gradually to proceed to a synthetic view. It is most important, however, St. Thomas concludes, to pay particular attention to such systems of thought as appear closest to the truth, with a view to disengaging the transitory from that which endures. The latter will have to be substantiated and supported with new proofs, so that its defense becomes impregnable. While the former will have to be discarded, what is still undeveloped but promises a healthy growth must be treated with particular care, so that it may gradually be led to perfection.

This consideration also throws some added light on the real meaning of Leo XIII's phrase *vetera novis augere et perficere*. What this formulation implies is neither a mere compilation and aggregation of commentaries and syllogisms nor the purely mechanical addition of certain new departments or disciplines of knowledge to the original body of thought.

[16] *De substantia*, 9; I De anima, 2; II Met., 1; III Met., 1.

The former attitude would be indicative of an uncritical acceptance of doctrine on purely authoritarian grounds. This attitude was rejected by St. Thomas when he stated that the argument from (human) authority is always the weakest of all possible arguments.[17] The second interpretation of the verbs "to augment and perfect" would assign to the philosopher the task of performing some kind of elaborate patchwork. What is suggested by St. Thomas and evidently meant by Leo XIII is no mere quantitative addition and enlargement but an organic growth, nourished by the eternal life stream of Truth itself. It is only by such a periodical rejuvenation from within that philosophic thought can escape from becoming ossified and sterile.

A rejuvenation of thought from within seems to be especially necessary in times of crises, such as St. Thomas encountered in the thirteenth century when he created the classical system of the "philosophia perennis," and such as characterized the historical constellation at the time of the publication of Leo XIII's Encyclical. When men find themselves placed in the midst of contradictory philosophical movements and cross-currents, they begin to feel discouraged by the breakdown of their exaggerated hopes and favorite beliefs. Badly shaken in their trust in established standards and values, they experience the lure of skepticism as a daily temptation. And yet, such a moment seems most opportune for the reawakening of man's inborn desire for Truth. It is in this way that Mme. Maritain describes in her *"Souvenirs"* her own and her husband's plight and quest at the time when they both were groping their way to the *terra firma* of the eternal philosophy, "that Truth, so ardently sought, so unconquerably believed. . . . We reserved for it an altar in our hearts, we loved it ardently without knowing it, and in advance we acknowledged its claims on us and on our lives. . . . Would it rise like the sun to start upon a long journey of happy discoveries? Or, like the moon, would it only shine upon the night of our misery? Or would it be like the star-lit sky: light and darkness at one and the same time? We did not know. We knew only

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[17] ". . . licet locus ab auctoritate quae fundatur super ratione humana, sit infirmissimum; locus tamen ab auctoritate quae fundatur super revelatione divina, est efficacissimum." (*Summa Theologica*, I, q. 1, a. 8, ad 2.)

that whatever it might be it would be our mistress, and we would be her servants."[18]

The attitude so eloquently described by Mme. Maritain aims at a philosophy of integral realism, and it is this realistic approach, tending as it were to a sphere of transsubjective norms and values, which liberates the philosopher and his philosophy from the limitations of partial and subjectively distorted views, and which also serves as a connecting link between the "perennial" tradition of thought and the several realistic trends in contemporary philosophy. This realism, however, presupposes not only an unbiased love of Truth as an end in itself and as embedded in a realm of objective validity, but it also requires a frank recognition of the reflection and counterpart of the transsubjective order of reality in the constitution of the human being, his live-forces and faculties. The "realistic" philosopher, therefore, recognizing in intelligence, reason, or understanding the highest faculty and the distinctive mark of man, will have to accept its guidance in the operations of his own discipline and in the workings of his own mind. Philosophy then, it would seem, discharges its functions properly when it confines itself to the examination of natural truths by reason. To insist upon this point means to establish philosophy as a rational investigation which in itself is truly autonomous. However, to be autonomous within its own circumscribed sphere is not the same as being entirely self-sufficient. Reason evidently is neither infallible nor omniscient. In acknowledgment of this fact it will not *a priori* reject illumination by a superior source of light, if such a one is offered or discovered. The rational-metaphysical investigation of the nature of reality will soon rise from sense observation to the intellectual understanding of the created universe and of the human self, to ascend finally to an analogical comprehension of God, the first and final cause. As a "natural theol-

[18] ". . . cette vérité si ardemment cherchée, si invinciblement crue . . . Nous lui réservions un autel dans notre coeur, nous l'aimions ardemment sans la connaître; d'avance nous lui reconnaissions tous les droits sur nous, sur notre vie . . . Se lèverait-elle comme le soleil, pour une longue journée d'heureuses découvertes? Ou comme la lune, pour n'éclairer que la nuit de notre misère? Serait-elle comme le ciel étoile — lumière et ténèbres à la fois? — Nous le savions pas. Nous savions seulement que telle qu'elle serait elle serait notre maîtresse et que nous voudrions être ses serviteurs." Éditions de la Maison Française (New York: 1941), pp. 120 sq. (Raïssa Maritain, *Les Grandes Amitiés.*)

ogy," philosophy, by establishing the proper relationship between the contingent and the necessary, and by thoroughly analyzing the nature of contingency, will attempt the rational demonstration of the existence of God, the immortality of the human soul, the freedom of the human will, and the possibility as well as the necessity of a supernatural revelation. It will thus provide the intellectual presuppositions or "preambles" of faith, leaving to theology the task of drawing its arguments and conclusions from the dogmatic premises of revelation and from the contents of faith. Philosophy, then, is possible as an autonomous discipline in its own right, "though it cannot demonstrate all truth; it is enough that every demonstrated proposition is true."[19] Consequently, philosophy is "the handmaid of theology" (*ancilla theologiae*), not in the sense that its conclusions are predetermined beforehand by another discipline, but in that it acknowledges theology as the science of divine revelation and accepts its aid and moral support. "Philosophy . . . is subordinate to theology, but, as philosophy, it depends on nothing but its own proper method; based on human reason . . . it reaches an accord with faith spontaneously and without having to deviate from its own proper path. If it does so it is simply because it is true, and because one truth cannot contradict another."[20]

The chances for a growing rapprochement between the "perennial" tradition and contemporary "realism" in philosophy have become more auspicious in recent years. Out of Germany has come the call for a "resurrection of metaphysics," and the "phenomenology" of Edmund Husserl and his school (Scheler, Geiger, Heidegger, etc.) as well as Nicolai Hartmann's decisive turn from Kantian idealism to Aristotelian realism signified an important change in philosophical convictions which seemed to be deeply ingrained. While in France the return of leading philosophers to the "philosophia perennis" was most remarkable, the clashes between the antimetaphysical positivism of Auguste Comte's disciples and the new defenders of metaphysics in that country were most

[19] R. Kremer, "The Prejudices Against the New Scholasticism," in *Present Day Thinkers and the New Scholasticism,* by John S. Zybura (London and St. Louis, 1927), p. 207.

[20] Etienne Gilson, *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy* (New York: Scribner's, 1936), p. 6.

violent. The revival of metaphysical speculation in contemporary secular philosophy in France is inseparably linked with the name of Henri Bergson (1859–1941). He was the teacher and friend of Jacques and Raïssa Maritain, and the latter ascribes to him and his philosophy their rescue from skepticism and despair. When they first began to attend Bergson's lectures, he was a professor of the Collège de France, while the Maritains were students of the Sorbonne. The two institutions faced each other, separated only by the "rue Saint-Jacques." Yet "there was a mountain of prejudices and distrust between these two institutions, and particularly on the part of the philosophers of the Sorbonne with regard to the philosophy of Bergson."[21] Skepticism with its concomitant, moral nihilism, had eaten themselves deeply into the academic mind and into the teaching methods of the Sorbonne, one of France's oldest and most venerable institutions. Thus, the physical juxtaposition of the Sorbonne and the Collège de France, and the local proximity but intellectual separation of their teachers, expressed almost symbolically the antagonism that existed between the positive sciences and philosophy. At the turn of the century the same situation largely prevailed in the other intellectually and scientifically leading nations of Europe.

In North American speculation and learning the powerful influence of European "positivism" blended with the innate practical and pragmatic bent of the Anglo-Saxon mind (William James, John Dewey, etc.), leading to the cultivation of the natural and social sciences from a purely utilitarian point of view, and to the neglect and even contempt of philosophy as a rational discipline. The fact that almost without exception these "scientific" philosophers crowned their labors with some system of philosophical or metaphysical "scientism" furnishes conclusive evidence that it is impossible to dispose of metaphysical speculation as easily as the positivists and pragmatists had imagined. Both scientists and philosophers, by their achievements no less than by their failures, have substantiated again and again the conviction that positive science and rational philosophy cannot dispense with each other without mutual detriment. Both are valid and both are necessary, because no positive science can proceed without metaphysical

[21] Raïssa Maritain, *loc. cit.*, p. 116.

presuppositions or assumptions of one kind or another, and no realistic philosophy can exist without the support of factual experience and evidence.

Speaking of man's inborn religious urge, Martin Luther once remarked with keen psychological and metaphysical insight that man worships either God or an idol ("Der Mensch hat entweder Gott oder Abgott"). This observation is equally true of philosophical speculation. As Etienne Gilson has pointed out,[22] when some individual science, overstepping its boundaries, offers itself as a "know-all" and "cure-all," and tries to absorb into itself the functions and methods of other and essentially different sciences, the result will inevitably be the illegitimate substitution of one discipline for another. If one particular science proclaims itself as capable of serving as a substitute for all the others, that science will soon develop the symptoms of what in medicine is known as "elephantiasis." Then theology turns into "theologism" (Occam), mathematics into "mathematicism" (Descartes), natural science into "scientism" (Hume, Kant), sociology into "sociologism" (Comte), etc. — The example of Auguste Comte is particularly illuminating because here the founder of the supposedly strictly antimetaphysical system of "positive philosophy" actually ends by recommending the new science of "sociology" as a grand metaphysical substitute. Thus metaphysics, which he believed he had thrown out for good, enters in a novel disguise by the back door.

It would seem then that the slogan of the "resurrection of metaphysics" may have any number of meanings. An integrally "realistic" and therefore "true" metaphysics will of necessity be frustrated by any illegitimate omission, any arbitrary partition, any undue generalization in the fields of the positive and speculative sciences. A "realistic" metaphysics is identical with a realistic observation and interpretation of "being" in its manifold aspects and on its different levels. An "unreal" metaphysics will only yield various kinds of false "absolutisms," whereas a "realistic" metaphysics will issue in the discovery of true absolutes. It will, because of its intrinsic truth, provide man with a knowledge of the ontological bases of his own nature and thereby with an understanding of life's

[22] Etienne Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* (New York, 1937).

meaning and end. It will, last but not least, establish a hierarchy of sciences and a graduated scale of knowledge, attributing to each discipline its due place and proper function.

Would it be too much to hope that the metaphysical readjustment of man in accordance with the laws and proportions of being might lead to a realistic acknowledgment of his own true position in the created universe and thus provide him with a design for such acts as may properly be called "human"? If this hope should be justified and fulfilled, then the essence of the eternally true and the eternally good might once more find due recognition amid the transitoriness and frailty of human works. The "eternal philosophy" in a new garb would once again have borne fruit, and the way would have been prepared for another one of the great masters of philosophical synthesis, who would be initiated in the diversified knowledge of this modern age, and who, for the sake of eternal truth, would gather together the multiple seeds and germs and powers which now, like restless snowflakes, are blown hither and thither by an angry storm. He would put to shame the prophets of decline, dissolution, and despair; he would outbid with his gifts those others who have been dreaming of their earthly paradise of progress and utility, ruled over by millions and billions of horsepower. And he would usher in the dawn of a new era of great philosophic thought and great moral action.

Chapter One
BEING AND REALITY
(Metaphysics)

§ 1. The Concept of Being

THE most commonplace and at the same time the most mysterious and elusive notion of which man, the rational animal, has to take account in his thoughts and actions is the concept of being. It sounds paradoxical when we say that what we call being is both the richest and the poorest of ideas as well as of realities, and yet this statement describes only weakly the great complexity of content which is enclosed in the two little and seemingly insignificant words *to be*. They not only contain in themselves the roots of all the other forms and parts of speech, and therewith of all categorical statements and judgments, but also the cues for the understanding of all types and gradations of existents and essences, ranging from the shapelessness of pure and indeterminate potentiality to the highest degrees of actual forms and ideas.

The science which has as its object this vast and mysterious realm of being is commonly referred to as metaphysics or ontology.[1] The term metaphysics was first employed by Andronicus of Rhodes (about 70 B.C.) who, as editor of the works of Aristotle (384–322 B.C.), placed those books which dealt with being in its most general and fundamental aspects "after" those books which treated of physical nature (*μετὰ τά φυσικά*). Aristotle himself had used the term "the first philosophy" to describe that science which was to consider the ultimate principles and causes of reality as discovered and investigated with the aid of human reason. In the history of Western thought the

[1] It is customary to distinguish between general metaphysics or ontology (a term first used by Clauberg in 1656), treating of being in its most general aspects, and special metaphysics, treating of the special departments and realms of being which are dealt with by the disciplines of cosmology, rational psychology, and theodicy or natural theology.

terms metaphysics and ontology are referred to the science of *being as such* and to the knowledge of its ultimate causes. St. Thomas Aquinas (1226–1274), agreeing with Aristotle in regarding metaphysics as the first and supreme human science, at times also describes it as "universal" in its character (*scientia communis*).

This latter term seems to fit excellently the object of metaphysics as well as of philosophy in general, because all philosophy which rightfully bears the name is concerned with the study of being and reality. Being, in other words, is the most common object of human thought, its beginning and its end. But because the concept of being is the first and most general of human ideas, and because everything of which either possible or actual existence can be predicated shares in being and has some kind or amount of being, it is very difficult if not impossible to give a satisfactory definition of this common denominator of all reality. Because of its character of combined simplicity and universality, being in one form or another would have to be contained in the very elements of its definition. All we can do therefore is to give an approximate description of what is implied in the concept of being, by setting it off first of all from the idea of nothingness, and by including in our positive predication everything which actually exists as well as everything which possibly can exist.

If we say that everything is being which is not nothing, the further implication is that being extends not only to that which exists or is capable of existing (possible beings), but even to everything which can be conceived intellectually, i.e., to the realm of pure thought (ideal beings; logical beings).[2]

Finally, if we refer the concept of being to that peculiar being called man, we meet with a form of existence which is related to both the mental and the extramental, involving thought as well as action, intellect as well as will. Beings, however, whose willful actions and attitudes are intrinsically linked with definite mental patterns are properly called moral agents or moral beings.

A distinction is thus made between several orders of being which may be roughly described as physical being, metaphysi-

[2] Ideal being is real being, as known by the intellect. Logical being is ascribed to such purely mental operations as judgments, negations, syllogisms, etc.

cal being, logical being, and moral being. Metaphysics as such is concerned with those types of being which have either actual or potential existence, while logic deals with mental (thinkable) being, and ethics with moral being, with constant reference, however, to the metaphysical and logical orders.

§ 2. The Analogy of Being

IT HAS been said that the results of metaphysical speculation merely reaffirm on a higher plane the intuitions and observations of common sense. There is a great deal of truth in this statement. The man of common sense, confronted with the different orders of being of which the world of his experience is composed, draws certain conclusions from the series of observed data. The normal and prescientific application of his sensory organs and his reason provides him with a rudimentary knowledge of himself, of his fellow creatures, of the universe of which he and they are parts, and of the place which he and they occupy in the universal realm of being. In this way, as W. Schmidt[3] has conclusively demonstrated, primitive man is capable of reasoning from observed effects to their underlying causes and of arriving at the idea of a first cause or a Creator-God by means of a simple syllogism. In a similar manner ordinary common sense attains to a certain amount of theoretical and practical wisdom, to a certain knowledge of moral values, of right and wrong, true and false, etc.

If this were all that is necessary, the undertaking of the philosopher and particularly of the metaphysician would be ended before it had really begun. While it may truly be said that the observations of common sense are valid as far as they go, it must immediately be added that they do not go far enough. To the metaphysician, therefore, must be assigned the formidable task of raising the intuitions of common sense to a higher level, with a view to penetrating into the still hidden depths of being and, so far as is humanly possible, to providing an intelligible explanation of its mysterious qualities.

Now the first of these mysterious aspects of being which

[3] Wilhelm Schmidt, *The Origin and Growth of Religion*, transl. from the German by H. J. Rose (London, 1931).

is vaguely intuited by ordinary common sense, but which must be elucidated by metaphysical analysis, is its *polyvalent* or *analogous* nature.

The problem can be stated in the following way: Owing to the fact that the concept of being is so all inclusive that it comprises everything which exists or can exist, it is in its very generality empty of definite and determinate content. It is "transcendental" in the sense that it transcends or overflows, so to speak, all classes of determinate objects and categories. Being, however, acquires definite meaning and characteristics in the various species and categories in which it manifests itself in reality. In other words, while there is only one transcendental realm of being, there are numerous species of determinate beings, all sharing in a greater or lesser degree in the universal amplitude of being, their common denominator.

This reflection makes us aware of the fact that the general concept of being is realized in different ways and degrees in different kinds of "beings" and that it, therefore, has a different meaning and value in each class or category of such realizations.

This generic and specific difference of being which is represented by different classes of beings (minerals, plants, animals, pebbles, roses, dogs, men, etc.) does not destroy that unity which embraces everything that can be termed "being." And the understanding of the nature of this unity will enable us to probe the nature of the contractions of being in the different degrees represented by different "beings," and to establish a real relation between transcendental being on the one hand and the genera and species of being on the other.

Now being is predicated of things (beings) either univocally, or equivocally, or analogically. A *univocal* attribution means that the term which we apply to designate a certain number of things is used in an identical sense. Thus, we apply the term "tree" univocally to the apple tree, the pear tree, the oak tree, etc. In an *equivocal* attribution the term used has an entirely different meaning in its application to several things. Thus, we speak of the lock of a door and of a lock of hair; of the palm of the hand and of the palm tree. Here the two things have nothing in common but the name. Finally, in an *analogical* attribution there exists a real relationship between two or more things and their terms. This relation-

ship may be described as indicating partial identity and partial difference of being. Analogical predications, therefore, are midway between the univocal and the equivocal. Thus, we speak of a red rose, of a red nose, and of a red flag. The common term is "red," and all the things so designated share in it, but not in the same manner and degree.

The concept of being is of the latter type: it is *analogous* in the sense that wherever "being" is found in a determinate form in "beings," a partial sameness and a partial otherness may be inferred. The understanding of this analogous nature of being is of vast metaphysical importance. For if being were univocal, a real plurality of genera and species of being would seem impossible; and if being were equivocal, there would be no bridge to relate one being to another because none of them would share in a common nature. Our knowledge would be confined to singulars, and the way to both science and philosophy would be barred because both modes of knowledge rise from the singular to the universal and cannot do otherwise. Or, to refer the argument to a problem of strictly metaphysical character: if being were predicated univocally of creature and Creator, the essential difference between the two terms would be obliterated either by reducing the Creator to the level of the creature or by raising the creature to the stature of the Creator. In the former case the procedure would result in some form of atheism, while in the latter case the result would be some form of pantheism.

If, on the other hand, being were predicated of creature and Creator equivocally, there would be no possibility of arriving by rational argument at the idea of a first cause of the universe. The total difference between the two terms would be stretched to a point where reason would have to abdicate, and there would be only room left for a "credo quia absurdum" (I believe because the object of my belief is an incomprehensible paradox)[4] or for the "ignoramus et ignorabimus" (we don't know and we shall never know) of Du Bois-Reymond[5] and other disciples of agnosticism.

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[4] *Credo quia absurdum:* a saying which is by some attributed to Tertullian (about 160–220), one of the great Latin theologians of the early Church, who late in his life became the head of the Montanist sect.

[5] Emil Du Bois–Reymond (1818–1896) was a famous German physiologist and an exponent of antimetaphysical positivism.

§ 3. The First Principles of Being

BEFORE exploring any further the mysterious depths of being, it will be necessary to examine briefly those root principles or axiomatic postulates without which neither any individual science nor any philosophic discipline could ever be conceived. These principles are prior to all scientific and philosophical operations and formulations, and though the individual scientist need not even be aware of them, he presupposes them or takes them for granted without further investigation. These root principles are called axiomatic because they are self-evident intuitions of common sense. Their supreme simplicity renders them supremely intelligible, and once they are clearly presented to the mind they are also clearly perceived and do not stand in need of further demonstration.

On account of the fact that these root principles of being precede either in time or in nature the reality which flows from them, they are called "first" principles. They are both the first principles of thought (logical order) and the first principles of being or reality (ontological order). They comprise the Principle of Identity (A is A), the Principle of Contradiction (A is not non-A), the Principle of the Excluded Middle (X is either A or it is not A), and the Principle of Sufficient Reason (causality: nothing *is* without a sufficient reason).

The *Principle of Identity* states in an axiomatic or self-evident fashion that being is being and not being is not being, or that everything is what it is. If we express this axiom in the form "a rose is a rose," it may appear as a mere tautology. That such a statement is more than a tautology becomes clear when we give our axiom the form "a rose is a vegetative being." In other words, the Principle of Identity signifies an identification of the thing and the affirmative judgment of the mind, so that the logical definition of the mind corresponds exactly to the ontological content of the thing.

The *Principle of Contradiction* is the most fundamental of all the root principles of being, because without it any other judgment would be impossible. It states that *a thing cannot both be and not be the same thing at the same time and in*

the same respect. The self-evidence of this principle derives from a comparison of being with not being and from the intuitive knowledge of the mind that these two mutually exclude each other. Thus, it is self-evident that a man cannot be rich and poor, healthy and sick, short and tall, ignorant and wise at the same time and in the same respect.[6] Logically stated, the principle says: nothing can be predicated affirmatively and negatively at the same time.

On the Principle of Contradiction are built the entire logical and ontological orders, the realms of thinking and of being. Its denial or suspension would do away with the distinctions between true and false, good and evil, being and not being.

The *Principle of the Excluded Middle,* too, rests in the last analysis on the self-evident truth of the Principle of Contradiction. In its ontological formulation it states that *"X is either A or it is not A"* or that there is no middle term between being and not being. In its logical formulation this principle expresses the self-evident truth that two contradictory judgments cannot at the same time and under the same circumstances both be true or both be false: Man is either a rational animal or he is not a rational animal; a rose is either a plant or it is not a plant; fire is either hot or it is not hot.

The *Principle of Sufficient Reason,* finally, states as self-evident that no contingent being can be and exist without a sufficient reason. If we formulate this principle by saying that the very concept of being implies that it cannot be not being, we realize that its validity, too, depends ultimately on the Principle of Contradiction. This validity again embraces both the logical and ontological orders. Considered logically, the Principle of Sufficient Reason states that no thought content is without a sufficient reason. Viewed ontologically, it asserts that everything that is has a sufficient reason for its being or, stated negatively, that nothing is without a sufficient reason or an intelligible cause.

The Principle of Sufficient Reason was first clearly formu-

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[6] The qualification "at the same time and in the same respect" is added because a man might conceivably act stupidly at one time and intelligently at another, or he might be ignorant regarding some matters and well informed regarding others, but he cannot be stupid and intelligent at the same time and in the same respect.

lated by Leibniz (1646–1716), who claimed that it was as self-evident as the other root principles of being. Many modern thinkers, both scholastic and nonscholastic, have questioned this assertion and have tried to establish certain rational bases for the evidence of this principle.

It would seem that the Principle of Sufficient Reason derives its absolute validity from the concept of objective truth and from the definite relations which exist between being and knowing. The principle, therefore, has to do directly with the problem of the knowability or comprehensibility of "being" as well as of "beings," stating as it were quite unequivocally and optimistically that all being is more or less intelligible. Being and intelligibility are closely associated, so that wherever there is being there is also a certain amount of intelligibility. And wherever there is a deficiency, a lack or a total absence of being (not being), there is also a partial or total lack of intelligibility. It may be said, therefore, that the significance of the Principle of Sufficient Reason lies in the fact that it grounds knowledge in being and, by establishing the primacy of being, guarantees the objectivity of being as well as of true knowledge, making it possible for the mind to test the veracity of its judgments by adapting them to the objective proportions of being or reality.

§ 4. The Transcendental Attributes (Properties) of Being

FROM the discussion of the root principles of being we pass now to a consideration of its most general or transcendental attributes. We have seen (cf. p. 30) that *being as such* is the most general of concepts in that it is not confined to any particular genus, species, or category, but transcends the boundaries of all such determinations. In this most general concept of being all our determinate concepts are dissolved. However, it would forever remain impossible to understand the nature of being or reality if it could not be reconstructed, so to speak, by way of addition or composition. This reconstruction or composition of being takes place when we relate

it to consciousness or, more specifically, to the faculties of intellect and will. Out of this relationship grow several new attributes of being which, as they are common properties of all being, are called the transcendental attributes of being. These transcendental attributes of being are *the one, the true, and the good.* To these some authors have added *the beautiful,* regarding it as "transcendental" in its own right, while others have described the beautiful as the fusion of the transcendental attributes of unity, truth, and goodness in things.[7]

It is possible to consider being in its relation to not being, and then we arrive at the notion of "something" as opposed to "nothing," a division of being which in turn yields the concept of that which is undivided or *one.* The concept of *unity* does not add a real or positive but only a logical qualification to the concept of being. In other words, everything that is and is recognized as being is one and is recognized as being one. It is recognized because, and in so far as, it is one. It may be said therefore that *being and oneness are convertible.*

Furthermore, it is possible to consider being in its relation to a knowing intellect. If being and intellect are in mutual agreement, this relationship of being expresses (ontological) truth. In fact, the very concept of ontological truth requires the relationship of being to some (finite or infinite) mind. If intellect and being are disproportioned, this lack of agreement expresses "falsehood." Thus, we say of a man that he is a true or genuine human being if he as an individual person corresponds to our idea of a human being. Conversely, we say that he is "false," i.e., not a "true" human being to the extent that his personal existence disagrees with our idea of a human being.

Finally, we may relate being to an appetitive power (will) which moves toward the object presented to it by intellectual knowledge. In this case the accord of being and will is called the "good," while their lack of accord is termed "evil."

In each case, oneness, truth, and goodness are properties of being, while their opposites — multiplicity (diversity), error, and evil — express a lack or privation of being (not being).

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[7] Jacques Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism,* pp. 30 sqq. and 172 sq. (New York: Scribners, 1930); E. I. Watkin, *A Philosophy of Form,* pp. 313 sqq. (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1935); Theodor Haecker, *Die Schönheit,* passim (Leipzig: 1936).

In the case of the beautiful, a relation between being on the one hand and both intellectual knowledge and sense perception on the other seems to be established. The knowing subject, intuiting the properties of being (oneness, goodness, and truth) in the contemplated sense object, is pleased by the correspondence or congruity which is thereby achieved between the being in and of the mind and the being in and of the thing. Thus, the presence of such congruity is named beauty, while its absence is termed ugliness.

It was stated above that being and oneness are convertible. The same must be said of being and truth and of being and goodness. In other words, everything is true and good in so far as it is being. This qualification, to be sure, applies only to the ontological or transcendental concepts of truth and goodness, i.e., it applies only to truth and goodness in so far as they are grounded in and represent the absolute cause and source of all truth and goodness (God). Everything is one, true, and good in so far as its being contains and expresses its ontological relationship to the first or absolute unity, truth, and goodness. According to Aristotle, St. Thomas Aquinas, and the thinkers of the Aristotelian and Thomistic tradition, absolute truth and goodness have their source in the Divine Mind and in the Divine Essence. Nothing, therefore, is either true or good unless it participates in the likeness of the supreme truth and goodness. *That which is* (i.e., "being") is intelligible precisely because it proceeds from the Supreme Reality or the Supreme Being.

From this consideration we get a glimpse of what is meant by "eternal truth" or "eternal verities." "Even if you destroy all the true things, truth itself remains," said St. Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109). In other words, there is "eternal truth" provided there is an eternal mind. Truth is eternal or absolute only in the eternal mind and in the multiform participating expressions of this mind in finite, contingent beings. If, on the other hand, there is no such Supreme Being, comprising both supreme knowledge and supreme truth, then there is no truth in the ontological sense and therefore no truth at all. For truth exists only in relation to a knowing mind, and if there were no mind aside from our finite, contingent minds, there would consequently not only be no "eter-

nal truth" but no ontological truth at all. The reality of things is eternally true only if and in so far as it is eternally related to and in conformity with the way in which these things are known by an eternal mind.

A similar reasoning will serve to elucidate *the nature of goodness,* viewed as one of the transcendental attributes of being. Whereas truth has its seat in the intellect, goodness resides in things as related to a will. On the first pages of Aristotle's *Ethics* we find the statement that "good is what all desire." According to this definition a thing is good to the extent to which it is desirable. We may say, therefore, that while the intellect draws out of things (abstracts) their truth, the appetitive faculty (the will) is drawn toward things by their inherent goodness. That, however, which makes a thing good or desirable is some kind of perfection. But the primary perfection which is common to all desirable things (goods) is their reality (actuality), i.e., the mere fact that they are real or that they are "being." Hence we may now conclude with St. Thomas Aquinas that "every being, in so far as it is being, is in some way perfect, because every actuality (reality) is a certain perfection. But that which is perfect is 'appetible' and 'good.' It therefore follows that every being is good, in so far as it is being."[8] In other words, transcendental (ontological) being embraces the entire range of goodness: *being and goodness are convertible. Evil,* on the other hand, must then be described as a *lack or privation of reality,* as the absence of a due perfection, and in the extreme case where all reality, all being, all perfection is lacking, we arrive at the concept of "nothingness."

Now owing to the fact that the good in things (their being) attracts desire, the way in which being attracts being implies a kind of polar movement (polarity): a force of attraction on the side of the good and a striving or appetitive force on the side of an agent. Beings, whether of a rational nature (man), or of a sentient nature (brutes), or of a vegetative nature (plants), or of an elemental nature (the affinity of chemical substances), desire each other for the sake of the greater perfection to be attained by the fulfillment of their

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[8] *Summa Theologica,* I, q. 5, a. 3.

innate natural exigencies. The desire for the fullest actualization of their natures seems to be a desire shared by all types of being. It is for this reason that the idea of the good implies the idea of an end or of an inclination and purpose directed toward the perfect realization of a being's intrinsic possibilities (potencies).

These ingredient forces of attraction and desire in beings are indicative of the *dynamism of being as such* (ontological being). This dynamism expresses itself in beings and their movements toward an end or toward what is known in philosophical language as a "final cause" (cf. pp. 66 sq.). Such a movement toward an end "is effected in a rational nature by the rational appetite which we call the *will,* while in other natures it is effected by what is termed the natural appetite."[9] Thus, all things move toward their end in order to bring their own natures to perfection. But by doing so they simultaneously perfect their likeness to that fullness of being and that plenitude of goodness from which their own being and its goodness are derived. Their own goodness is participated goodness, just as their own being is participated being, and *the two are convertible.* The being and the goodness which each being has received from the absolute source of all being and goodness are further communicated from one being to another, with resultant movements and activities which tend to actualize all the potential goodness inherent in the Being of the created universe.

From the foregoing it should be evident that from an ontological point of view every being is true as well as good in so far as it is being. To be termed "true," a being must be related to an intelligent agent: it must be *knowable.* To be termed "good," a being must be related to a will: it must be *desirable.* Both the true and the good, the knowable and the desirable, are transcendental aspects or attributes of being.

What we have called the dynamism of being is more strikingly revealed in its aspect of goodness than in its aspect of truth. As all types of being share in the desire for the fullest actualization of their natures, they are all related to that aspect of being which expresses its desirability, i.e., its aspect of

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[9] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* I–II, q. 1, a. 2.

goodness. And as all types of being, owing to this relentless striving for their fuller actualization or perfection, not only perfect themselves but communicate to a certain degree their own perfection or goodness to other beings, it may be said that *the good is diffusive and communicative of itself,* expressing as it were the overflowing superabundance of being.

Ontological evil, considered correlatively from the point of view of the good, appears essentially to be suffering from the flaw of defection. It does not result from a fault but rather from *default,* i.e., from a privation of being or from an intrusion of not being into the sphere of being. Similarly, error as opposed to truth is not caused by a flaw in being but rather by faulty judgment, a judgment which ignores or contravenes the laws of being. In both cases a kind of not being appears under the guise of being.

If the good is that which all beings desire and, therefore, something to which all aspire, and if every being is good in so far as it is being, then *evil is the direct opposite of good:* it is *that which no being desires* (the nonappetible) and to which, therefore, no type of being can possibly correspond, i.e., it is a privation or a lack of being. The term "privation," however, implies that evil is not a pure negation, not mere nothingness, but that it is something and somewhere in between being and not being: it is the absence of a perfection which is properly due to a particular kind of being, according to its nature. Thus, blindness is a lack of being in an organism whose nature appears stunted without the faculty of optical vision (physical evil). *Vice* is a lack of being in a rational agent whose nature is similarly stunted by being deprived of a due perfection (moral evil).

§ 5. The Categories (Predicaments; Modes) of Being

THE transcendental attributes of being are predicated of being as related to intellect or will. The transcendental attribute of unity indicates that being is undivided in itself and divided off from every type of determinate being. The

transcendental attribute of truth expresses the conformity of being and intellect. The transcendental attribute of goodness refers to the relationship that exists between being and appetition (will).

Aside from and inferior to these transcendental and most general attributes there are several other and more concrete divisions or modes of being which differ not only in view of their relationship to either intellect or will, but which are realizations of different orders or classes of being. Transcendental being, as it unfolds itself, is broken up, so to speak, into several subordinate parts which in themselves constitute the supreme classes or "frames" of "real" being or of "reality" as such. These determinate classes of real being are known as its *categories or predicaments.*

While, on the one hand, such a contraction or concretion of transcendental being involves a loss in plenitude and depth, there accrues from it, on the other hand, a real gain in that these new divisions enable us to determine philosophically and scientifically the mode of existence of every real being, thus aiding in the understanding and interpretation of reality as a whole.

According to Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas there are ten such supreme categories of real being, each of which serves to answer certain questions that may be asked to determine the nature of real beings (things). These ten categories are: substance, quantity, quality, relation, action, passion, place, time, posture (attitude), and state or condition (*habitus*). This ancient classification has been retained in the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition of philosophy and has of late been reaffirmed by such contemporary thinkers as Hans Driesch and Nicolai Hartmann.

To understand the meaning and practical significance of these ten categories, it is necessary to emphasize that they represent not merely mental concepts or forms of judgment but also extramental modes of being or reality. It is in this, their metalogical or ontological character, that the categories of Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas differ essentially from the twelve categories of *Kant,*[11] for whom the above classi-

[11] Unity, plurality, totality, affirmation, negation, limitation, substantiality, causality, reciprocity, possibility, existence, necessity.

fication refers only to certain subjective and *a priori* (innate) mental forms which are prior to and prerequisites of all experience. The categories, to use Kant's terminology, belong to the sphere of "phenomena" and tell us nothing about the world of "noumena" or "things-in-themselves," the latter being inaccessible to human knowledge.

It has been doubted that the ten categories of Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas really exhaust the richness of being as it unfolds itself into its several modifications. Furthermore, it has been correctly observed that some of the Aristotelian-Thomistic categories evidently overlap. On the other hand, it can be said in their favor that they provide valuable tools for the understanding of reality and that so far no more convincing or more adequate classification and systematization of the modes of being have been offered.

§ 6. The Categories, Viewed Individually

A) *SUBSTANCE AND ACCIDENT*

WE HAVE already stated (p. 40) that in Aristotle's table of categories the first is called *substance*. The other nine, though otherwise distinguished, have in common the fact that they are all *accidents*.[12] It may be gathered from this kind of classification, and from the terminology used, that Aristotle regarded the category of *substance* as the most important and fundamental of the ten supreme classes of being. It designates that which underlies (Lat., *substans:* "that which bears," "supports") the accidental determinations of a thing or the absolute nature which is hidden underneath the relative appearances. The category of substance provides a special instance of the general metaphysical principle that everything relative presupposes something which is not relative, as everything contingent presupposes something which is necessary. Underlying every "expression" there is something which is expressed or which expresses itself; every whiteness is the whiteness *of* something, every shape or motion or growth is the shape or motion or growth *of* something, etc. Substance

[12] Aristotle, *Anal. post.* I, 22; *De anima* I, 1; *Met.* IV, 2.

may, therefore, be defined as a being *independent* of the subject in which it inheres; or, negatively expressed, substance is a kind of being which does not inhere in something else. If a finite being, it is not, however, independent in itself, since it needs a Creator. Such acts as walking, standing, seeing, or such modalities as "being large," "being small," "being heavy," cannot be termed realities independent of a subject in which they inhere. Such a reality is only the being which walks, stands, sees, or the being which is large, small, or heavy.

An *accident,* on the other hand, denotes a "being of being" (Lat., *ens entis*), i.e., an "expression" or modality of being. It is not independent but exists and inheres in another, either in another accident or in a substance. Thus, the substance "man" denotes an independent being which as such underlies every activity and modality which may be predicated of all individual men. It may, therefore, be said that substance is the constant and permanent nature of things which subsists in all accidental change and differentiation.

Many modern thinkers (Berkeley, Hume, Kant; the positivists, pragmatists, logical empiricists, etc.) have denied either wholly or in part the existence or knowability of substance, while others have acknowledged only the existence of either spiritual substances (Leibniz) or material substances (the atomists and materialists). These philosophers were brought to their total or partial denial of the existence of substances by the exaggerated rationalism or empiricism of their systems, the extreme rationalists trying to reduce all knowledge to intellectual knowledge, and the extreme empiricists claiming that all knowledge is experimental or empirical knowledge and all reality is confined to physical extension.

Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas, too, are agreed that substances as such cannot be perceived by the senses, but they add that they are nevertheless accessible to sense knowledge indirectly, viz., through the veil of their accidental determinations. If sense observation were the only legitimate source of knowledge, substances would be unknowable indeed, and their very existence might well be doubted. But as *reason* is an equally legitimate and valid source of knowledge, it is possible to know substances by means of the various quali-

tative or accidental modifications in which they reveal themselves. These accidental qualities are not "pasted on" the substance, as it were; they are rather the unfolding of the being of the substance, and the substance is the partly hidden and partly manifest source of its accidental modifications.

Plato (427–348 B.C.), as well as Aristotle and the Thomists, distinguishes between "primary" and "secondary" substances, but Plato's usage of these terms is directly reversed in the systems of Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas. For the two latter thinkers the primary substance is the real and concrete individual being or thing, while for Plato it is the general or universal idea, which is predicable of the individual thing but which exists strictly separated from physical objects in a realm of ideas. Hence for Plato all concrete individual beings are secondary substances, feeble images only of their eternal and unchangeable prototypes or ideas. For Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas, on the other hand, universal ideas do not exist in a world of their own but in concrete individual things or beings, and it is the human mind which is capable of abstracting the universal elements from individual substances and of forming universal ideas. Thus, it is by way of abstraction that we derive from one or several individual trees the universal idea "tree" or "vegetative being"; from one or several individual animals the idea "animal" or "sentient being"; from one or several individual men the idea "man" or "rational being." For Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas, therefore, *the concrete individuals are primary substances,* while *the universal ideas,* derived from individual beings, *are secondary substances.*

B) *SUBSTANCE; INDIVIDUALITY; PERSONALITY*

The distinction between primary and secondary substances acquires added significance when the attempt is made to explain the *problem of individuation* and to describe the *nature of individuality.* The problem of individuation involves the question as to the relationship which exists between the concrete objects of our experience (primary substances) and the universal ideas (secondary substances) which are embodied or realized in these individual objects. How can we adequately

describe and explain both the contraction and "multiplication" of universal ideas or natures (plant, animal, man, etc.) in concrete individual beings (oak tree, dog, Mr. Jones)?

Aristotle tried to answer this question by designating "matter" with its accidental determinations as the cause of the individuation (multiplication) of universal ideas. St. Thomas Aquinas accepts this explanation but adds some important qualifications and distinctions which greatly aid in the further clarification of the problem. Thus he describes a "first substance" or an individual as a reality which exists independently in itself and which is incommunicable to another. Such an independent and incommunicable substance the philosophers and theologians of the medieval schools called a "suppositum," while the Greek philosophers had used the term "hypostasis." "First substance," according to St. Thomas Aquinas, may be either simple (immaterial: God, pure spirits) or composite (composed of matter and form); either subrational and irrational (inorganic objects; plants; brutes) or rational (human beings; persons). Subrational and irrational substances, accordingly, are indivisible in themselves and are divided off from every other kind of being, i.e., they are individuals. Rational substances likewise are indivisible in themselves and divided off from each other and from every other kind of being. They, too, are individuals, but individuals of a different and higher order, by virtue of their rational nature and the added faculty of free choice, a faculty derived from and guided or illumined by reason. An individual being on a rational plane, endowed with a freedom which makes it the master of its acts and, therefore, a responsible and self-determining being, is called a *person.*

The perfections of persons increase in proportion to the greater perfection of their rational or intellectual natures. These perfections are limited in finite persons (human beings and pure spirits), while the perfection is greatest in that Absolute Personality which is ascribed to the godhead. Likewise, the independence or autonomy (freedom) of finite persons is partial and incomplete, whereas the autonomy of the Infinite or Divine Personality is complete and absolute.[18]

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[18] For further discussion of freedom, cf. § 17.

C) *THE ACCIDENTS*

In order to relate a substance, which in itself belongs neither to the realm of extension nor to that of number, to the world of space and time, it is necessary to add to it several concrete determinations:

1) *Quantitative Being.* Quantity or extension is the result of a special composition or contraction of being or of a special ontological determination. Substance and quantity are different kinds of being, the former having an independent existence of its own, and the latter having existence only in and through the substance. The being of quantity, therefore, is *accidental being,* and quantity is the first or primary accident of inorganic and organic bodies, i.e., of entities which exist in space and time. Quantity is the first accident because only through it is it possible for the other accidents to inhere in a substance, and because without it the other accidental properties of bodies would not even be conceivable. Quantity furthermore is the basis of the divisibility as well as of the individuation of bodies and therewith also the principle of addition, subtraction, and multiplication. This significance of quantity was recognized by Plato when he stated that the primary determinations of matter are found in "the big" and "the small."

Quantity may be predicated not only in relation to that which can be counted but also in relation to degrees of intensity or efficiency, as is the case with measurable dynamic quantities in physics, such as amperes, volts, horsepower, or other units of physical valency.

The concept of a *continuous quantity,* i.e., of *physical extension* as realized in space, time, and motion, is a common characteristic of all bodies. Nevertheless, extension is rather an effect of quantity than identical with it. When Descartes maintained that body and extension were one and the same thing, he described adequately the nature of mathematical bodies but misjudged the nature of physical bodies. It is common knowledge that the latter produce in us impressions which to a large degree transcend the property of pure extension, e.g., impressions of heaviness, of chemical constitution, of shape, etc. While it is, therefore, true that an unextended

body is inconceivable, it is necessary to add that the property of extension does not exhaust or completely describe the nature of bodies.

The practical importance of the accidental properties of quantity and extension is evidenced by the fact that on these accidental determinations of being rests the objective validity of the mathematical and physicomathematical sciences (geometry, trigonometry, stereometry, statics, dynamics, mechanics, etc.).

2) *Qualitative Being.* Whereas the quantitative determinations of being answer the questions: how big? how small? how much?, the qualitative determinations of being answer the question: what kind of a thing is it? The qualitative determinations are likewise accidental with regard to the substance. They add some accidental changes to the species of the substance without impairing its nature, as is the case when we say: the sky is blue; the iron is hot; this man is cruel.

There are many such real modifications of substances which have this character of accidental qualities, such as sickness and health, beauty and ugliness, virtues and vices, and no less the sense qualities of bodies and the psychological faculties of animate and rational beings. In rational beings such psychological faculties or qualities are equivalent to the ability to accomplish specified tasks or to produce certain effects, and they, therefore, constitute the root principles of action.

The repeated use of such faculties is conducive to the creation of enduring psychological dispositions or *habits,* which establish an intrinsic relationship between specific faculties and their corresponding acts, so that eventually the aptitude to perform these acts and the ease of their performance may become a kind of "second nature." Thus the relation of faculty (quality of being) to act or "moral habit" effectively illustrates the way in which *morality* (ethics) is *rooted in psychology* and psychology in *metaphysics.* Inanimate and subrational natures (chemical elements, bees, ants, spiders, etc.), following in their movements and courses of action a strictly determined pattern, are incapable of developing "moral habits" and are, therefore, properly speaking incapable of either improvement or degeneration. Thus, progress and retrogression, growing moral perfection and depravation are evi-

dence and the prerogatives of free and rational natures. Acquired habitual patterns of action, virtue and vice, testify positively as well as negatively to the continuity and consistency of personal character. The significance of these psychological factors for education in general and the education of the will in particular is self-evident.

The accidental quality of *"passion"* in the wider sense refers to the faculties of "passive" (Lat., *passio:* suffering, or the correlative of *actio: action*) receptivity to certain impressions (sense faculties, etc.) and in a more restricted sense to dispositions of character and the "passions" in the familiar and popular connotation of the term.

The accidental quality of *external form* is not identical with that of bodily extension, but rather further delimits and determines quantity. As a visible expression of structural relations it reveals to some extent the substantial nature of the being or object in question, and the scientific significance of such external form is well recognized in such disciplines as chemical morphology, crystallography, botany, zoology, biology, biological morphology, etc.

The *sense qualities* (size, shape, density, movement, color, sound, smell, etc.) as well as all other qualities were for St. Thomas Aquinas *the real properties of concrete things,* while in modern philosophy the attempt has been made to deny the objective reality of qualities, to reduce them either to purely quantitative determinations and relationships, or to describe them, as to origin and existence, as purely subjective-physiological phenomena. John Locke (1632–1704) distinguished between "primary" (mathematical, spacial, temporal determinations of size, shape, number, position, and movement) and "secondary" (color, tone, smell, taste, etc.) qualities, admitting objective existence only for the former and restricting the reality of the latter to the sphere of subjective consciousness. Berkeley (1684–1753) and Hume (1711–1776) denied the objectivity of all the material qualities of objects. According to Hume the assumption of an extramental world is a matter of "faith" rather than of knowledge. After having thus dispensed with all metaphysics, skepticism remained as the only alternative.

3) *Relational Being.* The many philosophical controversies

concerning the nature of the category of relation suggest that we are confronted here with an important problem. What is really at stake is that all-pervading *order* of which St. Thomas Aquinas said it was the best thing in the universe (*optimum universi*). This order manifestly is realized in a multitude of relations, and the question which challenges the speculation of the philosopher refers to the nature or quiddity of these ordered relations. Is the order of the universe merely a result of the creative and ordering activity of the human mind, as Kant and all the idealists and phenomenalists have assumed, or has this order a real existence in itself, outside and even without the human mind, as all the realists and especially the Aristotelians and Thomists assert? Are relations mental constructs or are they real entities?

The answer to these questions will have to take account of the constitutive elements of relationship. Now every relation involves three factors: (1) a subject or a bearer of the relation, i.e., that which is related to something else; (2) a term to which a subject is related; (3) a foundation or common basis which makes it possible and meaningful to speak of relationship. This common basis may express a relationship either of identity and proportion (quantitative relations) or a relationship of causality, end (aim, purpose), dependence, kinship, energetic force, etc. (causal relations).

Furthermore, the relation existing between the two correlative poles of subject and term may be a relation between concepts or elements of thought, as is the case when we define and systematize ideas or establish relationships between different branches of knowledge (logical relations). Or, secondly, the relation existing between subject and term may be a relation between extramental objects and beings, as between quantities (big, small; double, half, etc.) or as between energies, activities, and receptivities (the mover and the moved; bud and blossom; father and son, etc.). Quite aside from being logical, relations of this latter kind are also *real*. In other words, the human mind by no means creates these and other relations between real objects: it rather observes and reconstructs them.

After the foregoing analysis of logical and real relations and their correlative poles, the question as to the nature of "relational being" is still unanswered. What, if any, degree of

reality must be attributed to "being related"? Is it "being" in the full sense? Is it nothing? Is it a mental construct?

The answer of St. Thomas Aquinas ascribes to "relational being" an accidental rather than a substantial reality, taking cognizance of its dependency on its correlative poles and on the common foundation which supports and sustains its "being related." Hence relationships are neither "things" nor are they "nothings." They are real in a restricted and qualified sense. That is why we are justified in attributing reality to the manifold physical, psychological, and causal relations which we observe in the physical and moral universe.

4) *Space and Time.* In considering the accident of quantity we stated that continuous quantity or extension is realized in space and time. An analysis of these concepts will, therefore, serve to explore more fully the nature of quantitative or extended being.

The apperception of *space* is mediated by the senses of sight and touch and by the kinesthetic sense. In so far as these processes are of a psychological nature, they are not the concern of metaphysics. On the other hand, the question as to the objectivity (reality) or subjectivity of space is a strictly metaphysical one. The objectivity of space was denied by idealistic philosophers in ancient and modern times. Kant, for example, described spaciousness as an innate, *a priori* (preceding all experience) form of sense intuition. Against this view it must be maintained that the entire spacial order of things, their extension, distance, and co-ordination does not depend on our mental concepts but that conversely our concept of space is fashioned in accordance with objective spacial relations. We are not at liberty to invest the contents of our experience with arbitrary spacial properties, directions, dimensions, and locations. On the other hand, it would be equally misleading to attribute to space an absolute substantial existence, as did, among others, Plato, Newton, and the ancient and modern atomists, or to identify space with the physical nature of things, as did Descartes.

While the category of space evidently comprises only physical objects and their movements, the category of *time* applies also to nonspacial, nonmaterial, purely mental and spiritual forms of being and their activities. The category of time,

therefore, plays an essential part in those disciplines which deal with genetic and historic evolution.

The difficulties which a clarification of the problem of time entails are well expressed in St. Augustine's (354–430) famous saying: "What then is time? If nobody asks me, I know it. But when I try to explain it to a questioner, then I don't know it."[14]

Aristotle stressed the intimate relation of time and motion, for without motion there would be neither time nor the concept of time. And yet time and motion are not identical. If they were, the multiplicity of motions would establish a multiplicity of times, and the unity and continuity of time would be lost. Aristotle, therefore, concluded that time was the counting or measuring of motion with regard to the "before" and "after" of its individual moments. This argument refers to the objective aspect of time, its real flux and flow. But the same author also paid attention to the measuring and counting activities of the subject. He asked whether there could be a time without an apperceptive mind, and he answered that time was indeed a reality independent of a human mind but that a measurement of time was inconceivable without a measuring mind.

To St. Augustine we owe a most profound psychological analysis of the concept of time. The time element appears to him as a tension (*distensio*) of the human soul. For, he argues, when we measure time we do not measure the future which is not as yet, and we do not measure the past which is no longer, but we measure something in the human soul, something which is made present either by memory or by expectation: "In thee, my soul, I measure time."[15] St. Thomas Aquinas further elaborates on the speculation of both Aristotle and St. Augustine and places strong emphasis on the objective reality of time.[16]

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[14] *Confessions*, XI, 14.

[15] *Confessions*, XI, 28.

[16] In modern times the French philosopher Henri Bergson (1859–1941) and the German philosophers Franz Brentano (1838–1917) and Edmund Husserl (1859–1935) have enriched the historical treatment of the time problem by profound metaphysical analyses of their own. Cf. H. Bergson, *Matière et Mémoire* (1896, 1925); E. Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie*. Halle, 1913; Eng. Ed.: *Ideas; General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, transl. by W. R. B. Gibson (London: 1931); F. Brentano, "Gesammelte philosophische Schriften" in F. Meiner's *Philosophische Bibliothek*, Leipzig.

As is the case with the category of space, the psychological constitutive elements of the time concept do not directly belong to the province of metaphysics, which considers chiefly the general ontological elements of the problem of time.

The idea which is most intimately associated with the nature of time is that of *duration,* i.e., the continuous identity of a being or state as against change and annihilation. Duration thus implies steadiness and continuity and provides the unified background for the events of a temporal succession. The second important element, therefore, in the nature of time is that of a flux or change which is one dimensional, i.e., proceeding in one and the same direction, and irreversible. The third major element in the nature of time is that of temporal order, relating to the "before" and "after," to "past," "present," and "future" and ultimately anchored in the causal order of reality.

An indefinite extension of the divisibility and multiplication of time is logically and ontologically conceivable. However, when we speak of "real" or objective time, these expressions can only have reference to "present" time, while the "past" as well as the "future" are "unreal" in the sense that they have existence only as contents of consciousness, either as memory or as expectation. "Real" or objective time is coexistent with change and motion. Where there is no change and motion, there is also no "real" time.

To deny with the idealists the reality of time means to deny meaning and validity to any attempts and methods which are concerned with the measuring of time. The arguments adduced against the supposed unreality of space are equally valid with regard to the category of time. We are not at liberty to invest our experiences with arbitrary temporal relations but are bound to adjust the contents of our consciousness to the objective relations of "real" time.

Finally, it is necessary to determine the nature of time in relation to *eternity.* Both space and time may be said to be capable of potentially infinite expansion or extension, respectively. By "potentially infinite" is meant the possibility of multiplying and dividing space and time indefinitely. But the indefinitely continued multiplication and division of time will never yield the idea of eternity. Or, to express the same thought

differently, a mere mathematical infinity is not an absolute infinity but only a potential infinity. In other words, *eternity* is not the summation of an infinite number of finite elements, but eternity is the complete absence or negation of time: *the eternal is the timeless,* i.e., it is without measurable duration, without temporal order, measure, limit, and succession, without beginning and without end. Hence for both Plato and Aristotle eternity is never attributable to finite and changeable, but only to infinite and immutable being.[17]

5) *Action and Receptivity ("passio").* As we have tried to demonstrate, the common denominator in all the objects of our experience is "being" of one kind or another. In one way or another all things of which we know "are"; they "exist." But when we say they are or exist "in one way or another" we thereby indicate that their being is not fixed or static but that it is mobile or dynamic.

We observe beings in various processes of change and de-

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[17] *Plato, Timaios,* 10; Aristotle, *Phys.,* IV, 1.

All scholastic philosophers, medieval and modern alike, distinguish between *three kinds of duration.* To describe them they use the Latin words *aeternitas, aevum,* and *tempus. Aeternitas* (eternity) is the measure of the duration of that which is altogether *unchangeable* and it can, therefore, be predicated of God alone. Eternity is a never beginning and never ending simultaneity, an everlasting "now," involving neither past nor future. Consequently, in eternity there is no succession, and even such things as succeed each other in time cannot be said to be successive with regard to or from the point of view of eternity: "Just as if there were a tree of such size as to stretch out over all the waters of a river, it would coexist with all the parts of the river together, even though these parts succeeded one another" — John of St. Thomas, *Phil. Nat.,* Q. 18, a. 1, diff. 3; quot. from R. P. Phillips, *Modern Thomistic Philosophy,* Vol. I, p. 118 (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1934). *Aevum* (an untranslatable term) is the measure of a duration which is likewise without succession, without a "before" and "after"; it is the measure of things which are immutable in their substance but subject to accidental change, of things which had a beginning and may have an end. *Tempus* (time) is the measure of the duration of things which are subject to change and corruption, of things which succeed each other in perpetual flux. Eternity can be called "the measure" of the duration of the unchangeable only in a metaphorical sense because a real "measure" presupposes a distinction between the measure and the measured, and such a distinction does not exist between God's being and God's eternity. *Aeternitas* then is an exclusive characteristic of the Divine Life, while the life of creatures is measured by either "aevum" or "tempus" or by a combination of both. *Aeternitas* is uncreated, whereas both *aevum* and *tempus* were created for the sake of creatures. *Human beings* dwell in both "aevum" and "tempus," i.e., in the *category of created time.* According to St. Thomas Aquinas the distinction between *aevum* and *tempus* is as follows: *aevum* is the measure of the duration of created substances whose natures are unchangeable and incorruptible (the human soul and the angelic nature). *Tempus* is the measure of the duration of the substance of man's physical nature (body), a nature which is changeable and corruptible. — *Summa Theologica,* I, X.

velopment, passing from one state to another, now gaining and then again losing reality, now appearing and then apparently disappearing altogether. And this mobility of being seems to be governed by certain conditions, relationships, and dependencies of a causal nature which involve on the one side a capacity to act or to give or to cause and on the other side a capacity to react or to receive or to be affected. This observation permits us to add to the predicaments of being those of *action* and *receptivity* (*passio*), the latter term understood in the sense of the capacity of "being acted upon." Thus, a man builds a house (he acts), but the same man is attacked, wounded, or killed (he is acted upon). A plant grows (it acts), and the same plant withers under the influence of the sun (it is acted upon).

In order to grasp the full meaning and import of these two predicaments of being it is necessary to consider briefly the Aristotelian and Thomistic division of being into "act" and "potency."

Contemporary Thomists have called the doctrine concerning this twofold aspect of being the keystone of metaphysics. It denotes the fact that any change involves a passage from one state to another, i.e., a process of *becoming*. Every becoming in turn presupposes a twofold potency or capacity: an *active potency* on the side of the active principle of change and a *passive potency* on the side of that which suffers the active influence and undergoes the change. An active potency is an "overflowing" reality, so to speak, a reality capable of affecting and perfecting another being, while a passive potency is an incomplete reality capable of receiving the perfections which it lacks. Thus, a chemical compound, for example, includes and combines active and passive potencies. Or an architect, constructing a building, impresses his idea upon the building materials which he uses: he actualizes the potentialities in his mind (active potency). The building materials, on the other hand, by virtue of their suitability, were capable of being acted upon by the architect and were thereby made into a house (passive potency). We therefore conclude that the potency underlying all processes of becoming is twofold, active and passive.

We may further say that everything which, actively or pas-

sively, is in some way or other capable of becoming or of change, everything which is capable of realization, determination, or perfection is *potential being*. It is, to be sure, a kind of "being" of which "existence" cannot be predicated because it is merely "possible," not "actual" being. On the other hand, it must be emphasized that potency is not mere "nothingness" because in it is contained the principle of future actualization. Hence potency implies an imperfection, a "being incomplete" which is perfected and completed by a process of becoming. Potency, therefore, can only be attributed to relative or contingent types of being, while from absolute or total being, in which every potency is actualized, potency of any kind is logically and ontologically excluded: absolute being is pure actuality (*actus purus*). Only the "pure act" can no longer receive any further perfections or determinations, and only "pure potency" or pure becoming cannot impart any perfection or determination.

It is this latter observation which compels us to say that "actuality" (the act) is first and "potency" is second, that act is prior to potency as a cause is prior to its effects. In other words, that which is merely possible or potential cannot realize itself: it must be realized by something which is already actual (an "act").

Act or actuality, therefore, as distinct from potency, may be defined as any present sum total of perfection. And potency is the aptitude to become that perfection. The passage, however, from potency to act, from that which is "being determinable" to that which is "being determined," is called "movement" or motion. Thus it may be seen that in the doctrine of potency and act the entire web of *causal relationships* is implicitly contained. Its basic metaphysical importance was first fully recognized by Aristotle. His own theory of "matter and form" and the profound speculation of St. Thomas Aquinas on "essence and existence" represent further applications and elaborations of that interpenetration of potency and act which permeates the innermost depths of reality.

When some critics of the doctrine of act and potency point out that our experiences do not acquaint us with potential but only with actual being, there is no possibility of denying that this is true. All we can answer in defense of the doctrine is

that we are using the concept of potency as a negative postulate for the explanation of the nature of positive experience, and that a more satisfactory explanation has never been offered.

§ 7. Essence and Existence

FROM the consideration of the supreme categories of being we return once more to the constitution of being as such. What we have learned about the nature of act and potency will now prove helpful for the understanding of two further aspects of being which in Thomistic philosophy are described as *essence and existence.*

Essence is that by which a concrete individual being is constituted in its own nature. *Existence* is that which constitutes a being in its actuality as distinct from mere possibility or potency. While a possible being has only a capacity for existence, an actual being *does* exist: a new determination or perfection has been added to it by the realization of a potency.

All actual beings have both essence and existence. Their essence expresses *what* they are (whatness, quiddity), while their existence indicates *that* they are. As far as their *essence* is concerned, there are vast differences between actual beings, but as to their *existence* they are alike, i.e., they all *are.* Thus, a pebble, a rose, a canary, and Mr. Smith differ in their essence, but it is obvious that existence is equally though analogically predicated of them all.

It will be readily seen then that ontologically an essence is very much like a *substance* in that it exists in and by itself and does not inhere in another (cf. pp. 41 sq.). And, like a substance, an essence forms the basis or permanent substrate in which all its accidents inhere and have their being. There is, however, this distinction between essence and substance: essence being by definition "that which makes a thing what it is," it appears that not only substances but also accidents have their essences, since both substances and accidents are realities.

Taking the above definition as our basis, we may now conclude that the term "essential being" implies a twofold meaning. If we consider the essence as such, disregarding its realization in actual beings, we may speak of a "general essence."

If, however, we include the concretely existing or actual being, we may then speak of an "individual essence." In the concept of "general essence" all particular individual characteristics are omitted, the attention being focused on those elements which all the individuals of a species have in common. These common elements we call "essential," and those elements which differ from individual to individual we call nonessential.

The question now arises whether or not essences can be known by the human mind, a question which has been the object of heated philosophical controversies. The possibility of arriving at an objectively valid knowledge of essences is denied by practically all the representatives of skepticism and positivism as well as by Kantian and post-Kantian criticism.

It seems that a sober philosophical analysis will have to admit that essences can be neither intuited nor known by sense observation. They can, however, be known by applying rational operations to the data of sense experience, i.e., by the use of dialectical and syllogistic reasoning, by abstraction, deduction, and analogy.

The Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophers regard the ascent to the knowledge of essences as a natural function of human reason, and they see in the concept of the essence the basis as well as the aim of the different sciences. These thinkers point out that we *can* know and in most instances actually do know the essential differences between minerals, plants, and animals; between irrational and rational animals; between body and mind, etc. These essential differences between several classes and species of beings are the bases and the source of their specific behavior. And it is an undeniable fact that the concept of essence is indispensable for scientific classifications, for the formulation of scientific laws, and for all scientific judgments which lay claim to general validity.

The argument for the reality of essences is further strengthened by taking account of the *causal relations* (cf. § 9) which penetrate deeply into the constitution of actual beings. There is no effect without a cause, and wherever we find a definite and co-ordinated set of diverse qualities, tendencies, compositions, modes of behavior, etc., these constantly recurring composite structures point to an underlying substantial unity which we call essence. Our sense experience confronts

us with these structures of composite and co-ordinated qualities, and thereupon our reason discovers their principle and basis in the unity of the substantial essence.

Finally, and most important, we have to decide whether or not there is a real or merely a logical distinction between the essence and existence of concrete beings. The question is of vital significance because it has a bearing on fundamental theological and philosophical problems, such as the concepts of causality, of creation, of the nature of the human soul, and of the nature of God. And the question poses itself as soon as the attempt is made to define the distinction between the Absolute Being of the godhead and the contingent being of creatures.

The answer is broadly suggested in the way in which such early Christian philosophers as St. Augustine, Dionysius "the Areopagite" (*circa* A.D. 500), and Boethius (*circa* 480–525) distinguished between the essence of an Absolute Being (*ens a se*) and the essences of relative or contingent beings (*entia ab alio*). To the former they attributed a perfect fullness of both being and reality (existence), while of the latter they claimed that they had received and possessed their being and their reality (existence) by way of participation (*ens per participationem*).

On the basis of this preliminary presentation of the problem St. Thomas Aquinas arrived in his tract "De Ente et Essentia" (On Being and Essence) at the conclusion that essence and existence are identical in God but really distinct in creatures. He argued that essence, considered in relation to existence, is of the nature of a potency which is actualized by the addition of existence. Thus, the essence of "whiteness" contains an element of potency with regard to the existence of concrete white things. Only in a being which includes in its essence all possible perfections, and from whose pure actuality (*actus purus*) every potency is excluded, there is no limitation either of essence or of existence: its essence *is* its existence, the two being identical as well as infinite. Or, to formulate the Thomistic argument in somewhat simpler terms: every element added to a finite essence, including the element of existence, the supreme and necessary being, nothing is caused, He rather is due to an extrinsic cause. Only in God, the infinite essence,

being the cause of everything: His infinitely perfect essence includes His infinitely perfect existence, i.e., in Him essence and existence are identical.

§ 8. Matter and Form

THE transitions from potential to actual being, as well as the actualizations of essences in existents are grounded in the phenomena of "becoming" or change, without which such transitions or actualizations would be inconceivable. In both its cosmology and metaphysics the Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophy has attempted to account for these phenomena by referring to *matter and form* as the constitutive elements of all bodies.

It seems that neither the theory of mechanistic *atomism* nor that of *dynamism* is able to explain fully and satisfactorily the constitution of bodies and the phenomena of substantial change. While mechanistic atomism and dynamism are valuable theories of physical science, they fail to provide an ultimate philosophical solution of the problems inherent in the nature of the physical universe. For mechanistic atomism the only constituent cosmic elements are extended matter and motion. For dynamism, on the other hand, the only constituent cosmic elements are inextended forces. To these one-sided propositions Aristotelian scholasticism opposes a third theory which is known as "hylomorphism" (from ὕλη = matter, and μορφή or εἶδος = form) or the theory of matter and form, combining the positive characteristics of mechanistic atomism and dynamism.

Hylomorphism offers a philosophical rather than physical explanation of the constitution of the universe. It is intent upon finding rational grounds for the observed facts of change and motion. And it sees in *matter* the quantitative principle of spacial extension and in *form* a qualitative principle of active force.

However, to understand the theory of hylomorphism correctly, some important qualifications of the terms "matter" and "form" will have to be made. In his attempt to account for the chemical composition and decomposition of substances

Aristotle arrived at the concept of a permanent substrate of bodies which he named "first matter" (ὕλη πρώτη, *materia prima,* prime matter) and at a specific activating principle which he called "substantial form" (ἐντελέχεια, εἶδος, entelechy, energy). First matter, according to Aristotle, is then the common indeterminate element of bodies, an element which is capable of receiving successively various determinations. Substantial form, on the other hand, is the determining principle which actualizes and specifies the potentialities of prime matter. Being wholly indeterminate or "pure" potentiality, prime matter can neither exist nor be recognized by itself but only in conjunction or in a natural union with form. There is nothing in physical nature which is either pure matter or pure form: all physical reality is actualized ("informed") matter and realized (individualized) form (idea). Thus, the corporeal world is composed of an ordered and graduated series of genera and species (chemical elements, minerals, plants, animals, men, etc.), the individuals of each species being grounded in their substantial natures and all being subject to substantial as well as accidental changes due to generation, corruption, increase, decrease, local motion, etc. And thus the entire realm of being is permeated to its very depths by a perpetual "becoming" which, so to speak, feeds on the successive actualizations of the pure potentiality or indetermination of matter and of the energizing dynamism of form.

Both "prime matter" and "substantial form" are conditions or bases of a substantial change which can be intellectually conceived but cannot be perceived directly in sense observation. From them must be distinguished what is known as "second matter" and "accidental form." While prime matter is pure potency, second matter is actualized potency, i.e., it is contained in a real body as one of its constituent elements. This body, in turn, is subject to various qualitative changes, modes, relations, etc., constituting its accidental forms.

In this way the doctrine of matter and form expresses the duality of nature as evidenced by the phenomena of becoming or of substantial and accidental change. By *substantial change* we mean a change which transforms the very substance of things, as is the case in the process of the decomposition or corruption of living organisms or in the case of two chemical

elements combining to form a new substance. Thus, a substantial change occurs when chlorine and sodium combine to produce salt or when hydrogen and oxygen combine to produce water. While in the new combination a common indeterminate element (materia prima) endures, the active or determinating element of a new substance has replaced the specific natures and properties of the original chemical constituents. By *accidental change,* on the other hand, we mean such superficial modifications in the mechanical and physical properties of bodies as do not affect or destroy their substantial unity.

However, the phenomena of substantial change still remain a mystery unless we add to matter and form a *third principle,* known as "receptivity" or "privation," a principle which serves to describe the way in which the actuality of a substantial form is "educed" from the potentiality of prime matter. For it is obvious that the common indeterminate substrate of substantial "becoming" (i.e., matter) must possess a potency or capacity for "receiving" a certain form before it actually acquires it. And Aristotle sees in this "receptivity" (i.e., the faculty of receiving) or "privation" the most profound characteristic of matter. For him natural evolution is an expression of the perpetual striving of matter for a form which it lacks but to which it is proportioned and which it is, therefore, capable of receiving. And so the evolution of bodies proceeds in accordance with certain natural propensities and affinities, tending toward definite perfections or ends.

This Aristotelian description of matter is virtually subscribed to by St. Thomas Aquinas. From this point of view then prime matter is "possible" substance, and concrete substance is "actual" matter. While for Plato forms (ideas) had been immaterial and disembodied entities, the Aristotelian "forms" are embodied in matter.

We have indicated above that prime matter, not being observable or experimentally verifiable, can only be described in negative terms: it is neither quiddity, nor quality, nor quantity, nor any other of the determinations of being. And yet, matter, being potency, is not nothing: it is as much a possibility and as much a reality as the raw block of marble which contains in its shapelessness the future sculptural form.

Thus, in the speculation of both Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas prime matter figures as pure potentiality. God, on the other hand, is conceived as pure actuality (*actus purus*). And in between the pure potency of the universe and the pure actuality of God are found those things and beings which are composed of the potential and the actual, of matter and form. "When matter reaches its perfection in that realization which is its form, that means for it a participation, albeit imperfect, in an image of the First Actuality," wrote Boethius.[18] And for Aristotle, too, the substantial form shares in the character of the Divine in that it is not only in itself excellent and desirable but is related to that which is most excellent and most desirable and "to which are attached the high heavens and the whole of nature, by virtue of the fact that they desire It."[19] In other words, matter in search of "form" is really in search of the highest and purest form, i.e., in search of God. And all those beings, inorganic and organic, irrational and rational, which are steeped in matter — if they follow the innermost tendency of their natures — range in an ascending scale, from the imperfection of potency and privation to an ever closer image of the perfection of the Highest Good which simultaneously is all-pervasive being.

If we say that prime matter contains potentially, in promise or in desire, certain series of forms in which it dresses itself successively in an evolutionary process, the question may legitimately be asked: where do these substantial forms originate? Where were they before they appeared, and where are they after their disappearance? To answer that they are of Divine origin means to refer to their ultimate derivation but fails to solve the question as to their immediate origin. The sources or seeds of these forms cannot be in prime matter because no amount of pure potentiality can ever by itself account for or be a cause of actuality. However, if the form is not contained in primate matter as the seed is contained in a plant, how can it ever be "educed" from prime matter?

It seems that a dual basis and dependency must be ascribed to substantial forms: (1) the active force which "informs" matter and (2) matter itself, out of which the form emerges.

[18] *De Trinitate*, 4, 2.
[19] XI *Metaphysics*, 1072^a, 14.

The form may be said to pre-exist in matter in a way similar to that in which works of sculpture pre-exist in blocks of marble. "To educe the form out of the potency of matter means to make of matter that which it is capable of becoming or to give to matter the kind of determination which it is capable of receiving."[20] In other words, the potentiality of matter is naturally proportioned or ordained to a certain form. And the generation of the form is essentially nothing but the substantial transformation of the material substrate or "bearer," aside from which the form has no independent existence of its own.

Even after having thus attempted to dispose of some of the difficulties attaching to the understanding and acceptance of the theory of matter and form, there are still many aspects of the problem which defy a cut and dried explanation. Speaking of these unsolved and perhaps insoluble complexities of this theory, the French author Paul Claudel contends that the doctrine of matter and form is not self-explanatory but that it serves to explain practically everything else in the world of our experience; just as a lamp is better known by the light it sheds than by its wick.

Among the objections with which the theory of matter and form has met in modern times, those which question its compatibility with the discoveries of modern science deserve the most serious consideration. It is said, for example, that spectroscopic research has furnished evidence that chemical elements remain substantially identical or unchanged in the chemical composite and that the constitutive elements of such a composite can always be freed and reduced to their original state. Likewise, it is pointed out that in the processes of nutrition the elements absorbed by the organism are merely assimilated without undergoing a change of substance. Finally, attention is called to the fact that the radioactive properties of atoms remain substantially unchanged in the composite and that the notion of the continuity of matter and the unity of bodies had to be abandoned after the discovery of the discontinuous structure of the atom. How can these objections be answered?

First of all, it must be emphasized again that the theory of matter and form is not and does not claim to be a physical

[20] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, q. 90, a. 2.

theory: it is a *meta*physical theory. Evidently, therefore, it does not attempt, as do the experimental sciences, to offer analyses of individual physical structures and forces. As a metaphysical theory it is concerned with the ultimate nature of bodies and with the reality in which they all share. Furthermore, while it is true that science has demonstrated that the elements of the molecule remain intact in the molecule, it cannot be denied that nevertheless the molecule acts as a whole and possesses properties of its own which are different from the properties of its elements. And as to the asserted discontinuity of matter, it is a fact of common experience, at least as far as living organisms are concerned, that they act as unities and, therefore, can hardly be considered as accidental aggregates of discontinuous properties. Finally, even if the experimental methods of science have so far failed to reveal continuity or substantial change in the material world, the possibility of such continuity and change is not thereby excluded, and the rationally based methods and hypotheses of philosophy are as plausible as the experimentally gained hypotheses of science. Both science and philosophy use theories and methods which are best suited to their objects and their respective ends.

§ 9. The Law of Causality

THE understanding of the nature of potency and act and of matter and form makes it possible for us now to approach the even more intricate problem of causal relations. The Law of Causality represents a special application of the *principle of sufficient reason* (cf. p. 33), which simply stated is that "no contingent being can be and exist without a sufficient reason." This very formulation indicates that the order of being and existence is not merely constituted of facts and things but also of numerous relations and mutual dependencies. These relations and dependencies manifest themselves in the continued activities of beings, and these activities in turn can be understood by means of the theories of act and potency and of matter and form.

Without that constant activity and receptivity of beings

which is described in the doctrine of act and potency, and without the correlation of prime matter and substantial form, the processes of becoming, change, and evolution would remain largely unexplained. But with the aid of these concepts we are not only in a position to throw light on the phenomena of change but also to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of "activity" (*actio*) as such.

Every activity may be said to include three aspects or factors: (1) the active principle from which it proceeds; (2) the receptive principle to which it tends or is related; (3) the principle of "becoming," which in itself is a composite of potency and act and marks the transition from lesser to greater perfection.

In its most general sense the idea of "becoming" or change implies any transition either from nonbeing to being or vice versa; or from potential to actual being; or from being in one state to being in another state: in short, any movement resulting from an "efficient cause" (cf. p. 66). This transition is itself a form of action, or better, of actualization, by virtue of which certain properties or qualities are transmitted as from cause to effect. "It is the nature of every 'actuality,' " says St. Thomas Aquinas, "to communicate itself as far as this is possible; therefore, a thing is active in so far as it is 'in act,' and to act means to communicate, as far as this is possible, that by virtue of which an active thing is 'in act.' "[21]

However, it would be contrary to the principle of sufficient reason to assume that real being could have its origin in total not-being. We therefore must conclude that being can originate only in something which *is*. Nothing can come into being from nothing (*ex nihilo nihil fit*). It is nevertheless logically and ontologically possible to conceive of the origination of relative or contingent being as following upon a state of not-being (and, conversely, as returning to a state of not-being) by virtue of the absolute power of a Divine Being. In this case we speak of an act of "creation" and call its opposite annihilation. However, such an "absolute becoming" as is implied in an act of creation we do not find in the world and nature which are known to us. Here we always observe only "creation in the second degree," so to speak, i.e., the generation of new

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[21] *De Potentia,* II, 1.

substances by virtue of the activities and through the utilization and transformation of already existing forms of being. What we observe in this world of created beings is transitions from one state to another, as resulting from various forms of local motion and from qualitative or quantitative changes.

If we try then to formulate the Law of Causality we shall have to state that it not only requires that every contingent being has a cause but that it either must be its own cause or that its own existence must be caused by something outside itself. Or, expressed in terms of potency and act: no being which is composed of potency and act (and that includes all created beings) can pass from potency to act (i.e., no being can become or change) without the operative efficiency of some other being which is already in act and which causes the change. In other words, every contingent being can be a cause only to the extent that it is "in act" and to the extent that it is capable of communicating its own perfection to some receptive principle or potency.

Summarizing, we may say that the Law of Causality derives from the contingency of created beings. It demands and attempts to provide an explanation and proportionate cause for the existence and nature of contingent beings. Generally speaking, that positive something by which a change is initiated and from which it proceeds is termed a *cause,* while the change which is produced is called an *effect.* Cause and effect together constitute the nexus of causal relations. The Law of Causality then does not necessarily express either temporal succession or temporal coexistence but rather an interdependence of being or an inner bond, linking cause and effect.

§ 10. The Different Kinds of Causes

FOLLOWING the lead of Aristotle and the scholastic philosophers we find it sensible and convenient to distinguish between four kinds of causes: *material, formal, efficient, and final.* The material and formal causes, referring to the inner constitution or composition of things, are termed

intrinsic. The efficient and final causes, referring to the forces and agencies which work upon beings from without, are called *extrinsic.* The former relate to the *order of being,* the latter to the *order of becoming.* A fifth kind, the *exemplary cause,* referring to the eternal creative ideas or prototypes of all things in the Divine Mind, was first mentioned by Plato and some Platonic and Neo-Platonic thinkers, but has received a consistent and cogent explanation only in the speculation of Christian philosophers.

This distinction between different kinds of causes serves to satisfy still further the demands of the Law of Causality by accounting more fully for the existence and constitution of all beings and existents.

The reasoning which led Aristotle to the formulation of his four causes had as its basis the contention that four kinds of questions must be asked and answered if we want to understand the true nature of any real being. Thus, if we take as an example some particular object such as a chair or a shoe or a book, we may begin our inquiry by first asking: "Out of what (material) is it made?" (*material cause*); secondly, we ask: "What causes it to be this particular kind of thing or to have this particular kind of form?" (*formal cause*);[22] we ask, thirdly: "By what or by whom is it made?" (*efficient cause*); and, fourthly and lastly, we ask: "For what purpose or end is it made?" (*final cause*). By adding together or combining all the answers to these four questions we learn to know the full raison d'être of this or that particular thing or being, i.e., we learn "how" it is and "why" it is what it is.

It appears that of these four causes the *final cause* is the most important, for as the Thomists express it, "every agent acts in view of an end," and *it is the end or the final cause which moves the efficient cause to act.* Thus, the chairmaker or shoemaker or bookmaker must first conceive in his mind the purpose of a chair or a shoe or a book before he begins making these objects. He can be said to be a good craftsman

[22] The understanding of the nature of the "material cause" and its correlative, the "formal cause," is greatly aided by the theory of *hylomorphism* (cf. pp. 58 sq.). The indeterminate, but determinable, substrate in any accidental or substantial change is *matter,* while the activating and determining principle in any such change is *form. Prime* matter, being that *out of which* something is made, and *substantial* form, being that which *actualizes prime matter* and makes a thing or species what it is, are both *true causes.*

only if he "knows what he is doing" and *why* he is doing it. Therefore, we may say with St. Thomas Aquinas that "the end is a cause inasmuch as it moves the agent to its operation."[23] And we may add that this end or final cause is *first in intention but last in execution,* i.e., in its ideal being the final cause precedes the efficient cause, whereas from the point of view of physical realization (execution) the efficient cause is first and the final cause is last.

The saying that every agent acts for an end holds good for any kind of being, irrational and rational, material and immaterial alike. "Action for an end" is merely another form in which the "dynamism of being" expresses itself. It is indicative of a tendency, implanted in the very heart of all things, to strive for perfection or to actualize their potentialities. And the perfection or "good" toward which things and beings tend is what we call their end.

Now, obviously, things or agents act in view of vastly differing ends, depending on whether they are inorganic or organic, irrational or rational agents. Therefore, the Law of Causality, like the concept of being, applies to these different classes of agents *analogically* (cf. pp. 30 sq.). And to these different classes of agents corresponds a hierarchy of goods as well as a hierarchy of ends.

It is, of course, evident that purposive action or action in view of an end can be predicated in a strict sense only of rational agents, i.e., of beings endowed with intelligence and the faculty of free choice. The natural tendency toward perfection which we observe in subrational beings, as the growth of a plant or the smooth operation of the planetary system, simply expresses their complete obedience to the laws of their natures. And yet, the very laws of nature as manifested in the ordered processes, functions, adaptations, and co-ordinations of inorganic and organic life testify to purpose or finality in the entire universe. The fact that such purposiveness, wherever it is found, presupposes in the last analysis some intelligent mind and will, either contingent or absolute, furnishes, as we shall see (cf. pp. 86 sqq.), the basis of one of the proofs of the existence of God.

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[23] *De Potentia,* q. 5, a. 1.

If, on the other hand, materialists and positivists of every brand feel themselves compelled by their metaphysical or anti-metaphysical premises to deny that there is purpose or finality in nature and life, including human life, they are immediately forced to the conclusion that all seeming order and purposiveness are the result of pure *chance*. However, we can no more say that purposiveness is the result of chance than we can say that order is produced by chaos or that being is derived from not-being. To speak of chance only makes sense where there is a recognition and acknowledgment of law, just as an exception is only possible where there is a rule.

It is true, nevertheless, that we do not know and may never know the purpose of many things, and it is likewise true that many occurrences in nature and life result from chance. However, it is necessary to distinguish between what may be called *absolute and relative chance*. If we admit that all agents act in view of ends in accordance with their natures, the possibility of *absolute chance* is thereby excluded, but the possibility of *relative chance* is not denied. It is quite conceivable that several independent causal series may have a chance encounter at a given point or moment and thereby produce a fortuitous event. While each series as such is causally determined, the intersecting of the different lines of causation is purely coincidental in that it is without a cause save only the all-pervasive causality of an all-knowing Mind or Providence which as such constitutes and acts as a First Cause. In this sense we understand the saying of St. Thomas Aquinas: "The Will of God is the origin of the entire motion of nature, and . . . therefore its activity is required in every activity of nature."[24] Thus, final causality points to a lawfully designed and interlinked order of reality.

Although the possibility and nature of the free activities of "second causes" is largely a problem of ethics and will, therefore, be discussed in more detail under that heading (cf. Chapter Two), it seems necessary to mention at this point the radical denial of the efficient causality of created beings by the so-called occasionalists, such as Geulincx (1625–1669) and Malebranche (1638–1715). Like some medieval Arabic and Jewish philos-

[24] *De Potentia* III, 7, ad 9[m].

ophers, they stretched the scripturally attested all-embracing causality of God to a point where it left no room for the independent activities of creatures. According to the view of these thinkers, God alone acts, using creatures only as "occasions" or tools of His own actions. Thus, the attempt to elevate the efficiency of the First Cause led to the annihilation of second causes and thereby ultimately to the denial of the free will and personal responsibility of all agents, save only the all-powerful will and all-inclusive responsibility of the Divine Cause and Agent.

It is true, of course, that all secondary causes are causes, and can act as such, only by virtue of the Primary and Absolute Cause, but it must be added that second causes are as much real and independent causes as created beings are real and independent beings: they are causes and beings participating in the First Cause and in the First Being in the same way in which that which is contingent partakes of and is grounded in that which is necessary.

In modern times the very concept of causality has been severely criticized or totally rejected by individual philosophers as well as by entire philosophical schools. For Hume and Kant and, *mutatis mutandis,* for the positivists Comte and John Stuart Mill, the Law of Causality does not reflect and express any real or objective relations, but is merely a subjective notion of the human mind. Hume, the empiricist, for whom only sense knowledge is real, sees in all supposedly causal relations nothing but the result of repeatedly observed sequences of events and of habitual subjective associations, while Kant describes causality as an "a priori" (innate) category of the mind which is valid only for the world of appearances (phenomena), but has no reference to extramental relations and realities (noumena, things-in-themselves). Both points of view deny to the human mind the capacity to penetrate beyond sense perceptions and beneath sensible appearances to the laws and structures of being.

Against such attempts to explain away causality it may be said that common sense as well as science refuse to admit that such observed processes and events as the freezing of water at a certain temperature or the illumination associated with the lighting of a candle or the rising of the sun involve no

relation of cause and effect but are merely habitually observed sequences of causally unrelated occurrences. And, furthermore, we are quite capable of distinguishing between real causal relations and mere habitual associations, such as the observed sequences of day and night or the changing seasons. In other words, we say with conviction that heat causes a rise of temperature and that cold causes a lowering of temperature, but we would be foolish to maintain that night causes day or that winter causes spring or that one tone of a musical scale causes the next higher or lower tone.

Our discussion of the different kinds of causes would be incomplete without our devoting some attention to the notion of the *exemplary cause*. It plays an important part in the speculation of Plato and the Neo-Platonists as well as in the thinking of the early Church Fathers, who recognized in the Platonic doctrine of Eternal Ideas or prototypes of all things a certain relationship with the Christian doctrine of the creative causality of the Divine Word (*Logos*), as stated in the Gospel of St. John. Thus, Dionysius "the Areopagite"[25] recognized in the eternal "exemplary" ideas or "paradigms" the necessary links between God and His creation, between Divine immutability and temporal succession and change. However, the most comprehensive treatment of this "Divine exemplarism" we find in some of the writings of St. Augustine. He describes the "eternal causes" (*rationes aeternae*) as the Divine paradigms of all the manifestations of being in nature and history. They are the "exemplars" of every element of form, measure, energy, and beauty in the entire breadth and depth of reality: "In Thee, my God, are the causes of all unstable things; in Thee are the immutable origins of all that is mutable; in Thee are the living, eternal reasons of all that is irrational and temporal."[26]

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[25] Dionysius Areopagita was a disciple of St. Paul and the first Bishop of Athens. He is mentioned in Acts 17:34 as one of those Athenians who listened to the preaching of St. Paul on the Hill of Ares (the "Areopagus") and was converted. In the fifth or sixth century the name of "the Areopagite" attached itself to the works of an unknown writer, frequently referred to in the future as the "Pseudo-Dionysius" or "Pseudo-Areopagite." The real author of these works was probably a Christian Neo-Platonist of Syria. The scriptural fame of St. Paul's disciple caused these writings to exert an enormous influence on medieval theological and philosophical thought and especially on medieval mysticism.

[26] *Quaestiones*, 83, qu. 48.

This Augustinian description of the "exemplary cause" was essentially adopted by the leading scholastic theologians and philosophers of the Middle Ages, such as Alexander of Hales, St. Bonaventure, St. Albert the Great, and St. Thomas Aquinas.

§ 11. The First Cause or the Origin of Being

THE common characteristic of all beings composed of potency and act, matter and form, is their relativity. They are members in a chain of causality, and in their being and existence, in their origins, their activities, and their ends they are neither their own causes nor their own ends but rather caused by and related to something else (*entia ab alio*). In contrast to such relative types of being we can conceive of an Absolute Being which as such must be uncaused (*ens a se*) and its own end, i.e., it must be unconditioned and autonomous being, without limitations, without vicissitude, without need and want and, therefore, absolutely self-sufficient. If it can be said of all relative being that it is *contingent* in that the idea of its not being involves no contradiction, Absolute Being, on the other hand, is *Necessary Being* in that even to conceive of its not-being involves a logical and ontological contradiction. The idea of such an Absolute Being or Uncaused Cause is identical with the idea of God. And that part of metaphysics which treats of the idea and existence of God is known as *natural theology* or *theodicy*.

The philosophical inquiry which is the special concern of natural theology has as its starting point the simple question of common sense: "Why is there something? Why not nothing?" This query involves the threefold philosophical problem of the existence, the demonstrability, and the nature of God, the Absolute Being and the Absolute Cause. It can be answered philosophically, if at all, only by rational argument, and it will appear that in every step of the demonstration the *Law of Causality* will provide the indispensable basis and the most potent instrument of understanding.

We approach this most important and controversial problem of metaphysics by first inquiring: Is it possible at all to gain a knowledge of the existence of God by the medium of

reason? The answer to this question is of such vast import because our philosophical comprehension and interpretation of the universe and of man will largely depend on whether or not we are able to include in it the demonstrable existence of a First Cause. Positively or negatively, a philosopher's attitude in regard to the Divine determines the general direction of his thought.

But might not the question as to the demonstrability of God be regarded as unnecessary? Is not God's existence self-evident? Or, if not self-evident, is God's existence not perhaps an object and article of faith rather than an actuality to be demonstrated by reason? Is God not present within us in a most intimate manner, and can His presence not be experienced directly and intuitively? Is reason not an entirely inadequate instrument when, with its natural powers, it attempts to prove the existence of a supernatural First Cause? Or, supposing there is a God: is it not absolutely impossible for us, finite and limited as we are, to know anything about Him, either by direct experience or by discursive reasoning? Finally: do the universe and its inhabitants really require a First Cause? Are they not self-sufficient and self-explanatory, after all?

All these questions have in fact been asked again and again in the fluctuating history of human thought, and the different philosophical attitudes which they express may be summarized under the headings *ontologism, criticism, agnosticism,* and *atheism.* Before stating our own position, we shall try to discuss briefly the arguments implied in these four points of view.

A) *IS IT NECESSARY TO PROVE THE EXISTENCE OF GOD?*

The view that a rational demonstration of the existence of God is *unnecessary* because He manifests Himself in the immediate inner experience or intuition of the mind is known as *ontologism.*

All the defenders of ontologism are agreed that the existence of God is evident *a priori,* i.e., without the necessity of having recourse to empirical or rational knowledge. Ontologism insists that God is known before anything else is known and that the knowledge of all other things depends on and is conditioned by our knowledge of God.

The ontological argument of St. Anselm in his "proslogium" must not be confused with the tenets of ontologism. It is neither *a priori* nor *a posteriori* but, as philosophers say, *a simultaneo.* It is unique in that it attempts to prove God's existence from the very concept of the Deity.

As its basis it has the idea that in God essence and existence are identical (cf. pp. 57 sq.). Thus, included in the conception of God's essence must be that of His existence. If God, then, by definition, is *that Being greater than which none can be conceived,* and if once we have formed the idea of such a Being, then its existence is *simultaneously* included and predicated. For that which has its being in both mind and extramental reality is greater than that which has its being only in the mind. Thus, if God were merely an idea in our own mind and His actual extramental existence were not included, then something would be lacking in the original concept: God would not have been thought of as that Being greater than which none can be conceived. Therefore, that which is the greatest conceivable is also the most real in actual existence.

St. Thomas Aquinas subjected the ontological argument to a stringent critical analysis. He finds the demonstration inconclusive on these two counts: (1) St. Anselm wrongly assumes that all men are agreed that "God is that Being greater than which none can be conceived." Many of the ancient (Greek) philosophers either thought of God as a finite physical entity or they identified Him with the finite universe. While it is true that a Christian philosopher, for whom God and Being (i.e., Being as such, Absolute Being) are identical, finds no difficulty in accepting the statement "God is" as self-evident, this same statement has little meaning and less convincing force for a non-Christian or an atheist. (2) St. Anselm illegitimately concludes from the conceptual to the real, from the logical to the ontological order, from the order of thought to the order of existence, from abstract to concrete reality. In other words, from the understanding of the meaning of the word *God* it does not follow that God exists really or extramentally, and to that which is conceptually the greatest, *real* existence is by no means necessarily attached. It is true that the essence of God includes His existence, but the *mere concept* of God's essence includes only the *mere concept* of His exist-

ence. We may say, therefore, that *if* there is a God, then He also exists of necessity, but the decisive question remains whether or not there is such a Being. Thus, for St. Thomas Aquinas any conclusive demonstration of God must be *a posteriori,* i.e., it must start from His effects as they are given in our experience, and any true evidence of His existence must be gained by way of causal regress.

Kant objected to the ontological argument on very similar grounds. For him, too, to conceive of the Deity is to conceive of an infinite, most real, and most perfect Being, but he, like St. Thomas, maintains that there is no possibility for human thought to derive God's existence from the *idea* of this most real and infinitely perfect Being.

B) *CAN GOD'S EXISTENCE BE RATIONALLY DEMONSTRATED?*

The view that a rational demonstration of God's existence is *impossible* is held by Kant and by all those philosophers who either anticipate him or follow him in his denial of the knowability of objective (transsubjective) reality. We have seen (cf. p. 69) that for Kant the Law of Causality is merely a subjective category of reason and, therefore, unsuited for the exploration of the nature of "things-in-themselves." He extends his criticism of the ontological argument to the other traditional proofs of the existence of God, as formulated by medieval philosophy. It appears to Kant that all these traditional "proofs" are merely variations or disguises of St. Anselm's ontological argument. Convinced that the existence of God cannot be proved by "pure reason" and equally certain that without the idea of the living God human life as such will be deprived of its very meaning, Kant establishes God's existence as a "regulative principle of reason," as "a postulate of practical reason." In other words, Kant proposes to make the existence of God an article of philosophical faith, as not demonstrable by reason: "a concept which includes and crowns all human knowledge, whose objective reality, however, can indeed neither be proved nor disproved."

In answer to Kant's position it might be stated that God as a "postulate of practical reason" can only be accepted after His existence has first been proved. Or, expressed differently,

the existence of God is not an article of faith *in the philosophical realm,* which is not concerned with supernatural faith, but is one of the rational "preambles" of faith.[27]

C) *CAN ANYTHING BE KNOWN ABOUT GOD'S EXISTENCE?*

The view which holds that God is absolutely unknowable, by rational or any other means, is termed *agnosticism.* With the ancient Greek philosopher Protagoras (*circa* 485–415 B.C.) the agnostic says: "I say neither that He exists nor that He does not exist."

Agnosticism maintains either with Kant that we cannot acquire any knowledge of God's existence because we cannot penetrate beyond the innate forms and categories of our own mind and can consequently only have knowledge of intramental phenomena (idealistic agnosticism); or agnosticism insists with Hume, Comte, and Spencer that all knowledge is sense knowledge (empiristic and positivistic agnosticism). Thus, agnosticism developed with some kind of logical necessity from Kant's criticism and Hume's skepticism.

The agnostic arguments may be answered by admitting first of all that our knowledge of an Absolute Being can never be fully adequate but must here below always remain limited and merely analogical; by admitting, secondly, that God's being and existence can never become the object of sense experience or of direct intuitive knowledge in this life. However, it ought to be added that to say that God cannot be adequately known (i.e., known as He is in Himself) does not mean that He cannot be known at all. It is true that God is incomprehensible in His essence, but the fact of His existence and the nature of this existence may nevertheless be known, albeit imperfectly, by means of an *a posteriori* demonstration, starting from His known works or effects in the created universe and proceeding from these visible effects to an invisible and immaterial First Cause.[28]

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[27] Other "preambles" of faith are the immortality of the human soul, the freedom of will, the possibility, necessity, and knowability of revealed truth. For Kant all these are necessary "postulates of practical reason."

[28] This way is followed in the Old Testament, where we read in Wisdom 13:1–5: "But all men are vain, in whom there is not the knowledge of God: and who by these good things that are seen, could not understand him that is, neither by

D) *IS THERE A GOD?*

The view which denies that there is a God and asserts that the universe and its inhabitants do not require a First Cause but are entirely self-sufficient and self-explanatory is known as *atheism*. This denial of the existence of a transcendent God appears historically in the theories of materialism, naturalism, pantheism, and the several forms of positivism.

Any *consistent atheism* would have to prove: (1) that the universe is in itself and in its every part and aspect self-explanatory and, therefore, absolute; (2) that the idea and existence of a personal, transcendent God contains in itself an element of impossibility. These proofs have never been offered with any degree of conclusiveness.

If we say with Kant that the existence of God cannot be rationally demonstrated because our knowledge is confined to the phenomena of intramental experience, then we are in no position to make any predications concerning the extramental or transcendent realm of "noumena," including the essence and existence or nonexistence of God. Granted the Kantian premise, we must logically suspend our judgment concerning "noumena" and become agnostics.

Jacques Maritain, one of the foremost contemporary representatives of Thomistic philosophy, claims that consistent atheism "cannot be lived," and he finds evidence of this, among other things, in the heroic and tragic experience of a man like Friedrich Nietzsche, who had felt it his "terrible duty" to announce to the world "the death of God," and whose mind broke not only under the weight of physiological disintegration but even more because of the terrific strain of an attempted absolute experience of atheism. "Atheism, if it could be lived down to its ultimate roots in the will, would dis-

attending to the works have acknowledged who was the workman: But have imagined either the fire, or the wind, or the swift air, or the circle of the stars, or the great water, or the sun and moon, to be the gods that rule the world. With whose beauty, if they, being delighted, took them to be gods: let them know how much the Lord of them is more beautiful than they: for the first author of beauty made all those things. Or, if they admired their power and their effects, let them understand by them, that He that made them, is mightier than they: For by the greatness of the beauty, and of the creature, the creator of them may be seen, so as to be known thereby." Cf. also in the New Testament, Romans 1:20: "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen — being understood through the things that are made."

organize and kill the will metaphysically," writes M. Maritain.[29] In other words, the logical end of a consistent atheist would be either psychical or physical self-destruction or both. This is perhaps the reason why absolute atheism is so rare and why most of the so-called atheists are in fact either deists (Rousseau, Voltaire, etc.) or pantheists (Spinoza, Shaftesbury, Hegel, etc.). In Rousseau's "Émile" (IV) we even find the following severe indictment of atheism: "By overthrowing, destroying, trampling under foot everything which men respect, they (the atheists) rob the afflicted of the last comfort in their misery, and they break down the only curb which keeps the mighty and wealthy from giving full rein to their passions. They tear from the innermost heart the hope of virtue and remorse over sin, and with all that they even boast of being the benefactors of mankind."

§ 12. The Demonstration of God's Existence

THE objections to St. Anselm's ontological argument (cf. pp. 73 sq.) were based on the negation that the existence of God is self-evident. It did not claim for mortals a direct intuition of God, the Absolute Being. St. Thomas Aquinas holds that most of the so-called intuitions of God are in reality psychological reactions and reflections corresponding to the experiences we have of God's effects in the universe and in ourselves as parts of it, and that, therefore, both the "intuitive" and the rational experience of God's existence suggest inferences from effect to cause. The objections to Kant's critical "phenomenalism," on the other hand, were based on the contention that our knowledge is not confined to "phenomena," but that our reason is competent to apprehend being or reality as such, although different grades or classes of being are rationally apprehended with varying degrees of clarity.

A) *GENERAL PRESUPPOSITIONS*

The question then which a rational demonstration of God's existence will have to answer concerns the kind of information

[29] Jacques Maritain, *True Humanism* (New York: Scribner, 1938), p. 53.

which reason can provide regarding that Infinite and Absolute Being which we call God. And it is evident that the supposition that such information can be obtained implies certain principles and premises, some epistemological and some metaphysical, without whose acceptance any such attempt would be foredoomed to failure. The most important of these principles and premises were explained and discussed in the preceding sections of this book. They include and involve: the basic structure of being and thinking, the principles of contradiction, of sufficient reason, and of the different kinds of causality. Included among the common premises of the demonstration are the following: the extramental (ontological) existence of an external reality subject to objective natural laws; the transsubjective (extramental; ontological) validity of the principles of contradiction, identity, sufficient reason, and causality; finally, the congruence or mutual correspondence of the laws of thinking and being, or the conviction that thought and consciousness on the one hand and extramental reality on the other are ordered and proportioned to each other.

To these general principles and premises must be added a definitional clarification of some of the terms used in the demonstration, the misinterpretation of which has given rise to numerous unwarranted difficulties and objections. Thus, when Kant criticizes the traditional rational demonstration of the existence of God by claiming that the infinite difference between God and creatures excludes the possibility of a common denominator, he is not aware of the analogical nature of being (*analogia entis*) as well as of causality (cf. p. 67), on which the traditional arguments stand and without which they fall to the ground. If, on the other hand, being and causality are analogical concepts, then Kant's contention that a finite effect must have a finite cause and that no higher degree of being or reality can be attributed to the cause than to the effect misses the point at issue. For if being and causality are understood not univocally but analogically, then the fact that we discover a certain analogy or proportion between finite and Infinite, relative and Absolute Being, entitles us to make from God's known effects certain inferences as to His existence as a first cause. We grant again that it would be a futile and impossible undertaking to try to comprehend God as He

is in Himself, but it is quite a different matter to try to understand the world and thereby the ways in which God manifests His own Infinite Being in its finite beings.

Kant is also undoubtedly correct when he asserts that we shall never know positively *what* God is, but that does not preclude us from acquiring a trustworthy knowledge of the fact *that* He is. And yet, even of His "whatness" or of the essential qualities of His nature we may acquire some limited degree of understanding, by determining negatively *what He is not.* "For the Divine Substance," writes St. Thomas Aquinas, "transcends every form which our reason can approach, by Its infinity and Its immeasurability, and thus we cannot comprehend *what It is.* However, we have some measure of knowledge of It by our recognition of *what It is not.* . . . For our knowledge of anything is the more perfect the more fully we recognize in what respects it differs from other things. . . . And since with regard to the Divine Substance we cannot comprehend *the whatness* nor understand positively what distinguishes It from other things, we must try to comprehend It by way of negative distinctions."[30] In this way (*via remotionis; via negationis*) we learn that God is *not material, not finite, not composed of potency and act, matter and form,* etc. Using both the principle of analogy and the method of negation, St. Thomas Aquinas, in the *Summa Contra Gentiles* (I, 14–102), discusses the different attributes and qualities of the Deity in great detail, including the divine knowledge, will, freedom, love, life, and happiness. Contemplating the existing analogical perfections of knowledge and love, intellect and will in creatures, and considering furthermore the perfection of *being as such* with its transcendental properties of unity, truth, and goodness, in which all created beings share proportionately—he finds reason to affirm the existence of these same perfections, in the highest degree, in God, the author of all created perfection.

A final preliminary observation and presupposition concerns the *impossibility* of conceiving, under certain conditions, *of an infinite series of causes.* The qualification "under certain conditions" is necessary because an infinite series of causes *is* pos-

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[30] *Summa Contra Gentiles,* I, 14.

sible when these causes are co-ordinated or merely accidentally subordinated to each other, as for example in the series father son, father son, etc., *ad infinitum,* where it might be reasonably argued that fathers have generated sons from infinity and may continue to do so into infinity. And the same is true in the case of a craftsman who uses different tools, one after the other, and he might go on doing so indefinitely. If we consider only the technical and mechanical conditions of such activities, leaving out of consideration the nature of the agents and of the activities as such, we might suppose that an indefinite number of tools could be used by one or by any number of craftsmen.

On the other hand, an infinite series of causes becomes an impossibility as soon as we deal with *causes which are essentially subordinated to each other,* as in our second example, when we consider the nature of the craftsman and his activity as such: to understand his activity we have to refer to the causal relation which exists between the physical effort of his arm or hand, the action of his will, the motivations of this will, etc. In this case the activities as such and their causal sequence remain unexplained unless we can find at the end of the series a primary source which imparts causality to the entire series. In other words, *essentially subordinated causes* indicate not simply a causal co-ordination but an *essential causal dependency* among the inferior and superior members of the series, so that in the last analysis the entire causality of the series depends on the causal initiative or activity of its first member.

B) *THE "FIVE WAYS"*

The most famous arguments to prove the existence of God *a posteriori,* i.e., starting from experience and making the Law of Causality the cornerstone of the demonstration, were presented by St. Thomas Aquinas in the form of the "five ways."[31] They all are concerned with the solution of the most difficult and sublime task of metaphysics: to anchor the web of observed causes and effects in the universe in an absolute ground and in this way to account for them and render them mean-

[31] *Summa Theologica,* q. 2, a. 3, and *Summa Contra Gentiles,* I, 13.

ingful individually as well as collectively. All five ways have their common frame of reference in the concept of being as such, the common transcendental ground of all individual beings. Searching for the absolute source of *being as such,* the five ways lead from the contingent to the necessary, from the relative to the absolute. Each of the five ways bases its argument on a different set of observed facts or effects, each passing along different channels of experience to arrive ultimately at the identical goal. And as the entire demonstration has its common denominator in being as such, the five ways meet and intersect even before they finally merge. Individually, each of them demonstrates one particular aspect of God's existence and is, therefore, to some extent incomplete in itself without the remaining four, while in their unison the five ways describe God in terms of *five major attributes of His existence:* He is demonstrated as the *First Mover,* the *First Efficient Cause,* the *First Principle of Necessity,* the *Supreme and Absolutely Perfect Being,* and the *First Ruling Intelligence.*

The *first way* of demonstration is the *argument from motion to a First Mover.* Its reasoning is as follows: It is a fact of common experience that there are various forms of movement or changes in the world, comprising not only local motion but all kinds of qualitative and quantitative changes of which we are aware in our internal and external experience. Any such motion or change involves a passage from potency to act (cf. pp. 53 sq.). For "to change" means to actualize a potency or to pass from potency to act. Thus, anything that *is moved* is in a state of potency, and anything that *moves* (i.e., causes motion) is "in act." However, nothing can at the same time and in the same respect both be moved and cause motion or be both in potency and "in act," which is the same as saying that nothing can pass from potency to act without the aid or initiative of something which is already "in act." "To move" (i.e., to cause motion) means to *communicate being,* while "to *be* moved" means to *receive being.* Thus, that which *is* moved requires a mover, and if this mover be in turn moved or in motion, another mover is required to account for its motion, until at the end of such a series of essentially subordinated causes we arrive at what Aristotle called "the First Unmoved Mover."

"It is not possible here to proceed indefinitely (in the series of moved movers) because in that case there would be no First Mover and consequently also no other movers. For all intermediate movers are in motion only by virtue of the initiative of the First Mover, as a stick is in motion only by virtue of the fact that it is moved by a hand. Therefore, it is necessary to arrive at a First Cause of all motion which itself is moved by no other. And, as all will understand, this First Mover is God."[32]

One of the objections against this argument, first advanced in the Middle Ages and then again in a slightly different form in connection with Newton's First Law of Motion or the Principle of Inertia, concerned the validity of the statement that "everything which is moved is moved by another." Does not the vertically falling body, in following the law of gravity, "move itself"? Does not the moving body, once it is in motion, persevere in it forever, without being moved by another?

As to the objection based on the Law of Inertia, it may be said that the infinite extension of motion which it theoretically implies is experimentally unverifiable, depending as it were on a set of conditions which can never be practically assembled. And as to the objection based on the Law of Gravity, St. Thomas Aquinas admits that the heavy body "moves itself," but it does so only by responding to the call or initiative of nature which as such is the real source of the seemingly spontaneous movements of bodies. These bodies "are moved by Him who moves nature."[33]

The *second way* of demonstration proceeds from the consideration of *efficient causes* and *argues to the existence of a First Efficient Cause.*

We know from experience not only that there is motion or change in the world but also that there are relationships of causes and effects (cf. p. 65). In each causal relationship, however, the first member of a series is the cause of the intermediate, and the intermediate is the cause of the last. If the first member is eliminated, the intermediate and last members will of necessity be annihilated, i.e., the effects will

[32] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* I, q. 2, a. 3.
[33] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* I–II, q. 9, a. 4, ad 1[um].

cease to be. And as there would no longer be either causes or effects, the entire texture of causality would be destroyed. Our experience, on the other hand, testifies that there actually are causes and effects. And just as the waters in a river bed are not "self-explanatory" but require some source from which they flow or aggregate, so also all other effects which we observe are dependent on necessary causes. These causes in turn, however, not being self-explanatory, depend on other and superior causes, since nothing contingent can be its own cause. But we cannot go on indefinitely in such a series of essentially and actually subordinated causes and must, therefore, eventually arrive at a First Cause which is itself uncaused. On this First Cause the entire series of causes depends. And this First Cause we call God.

It should be emphasized that this argument makes no reference to any temporal regression. There is no question of arriving at a temporal beginning of the cause-effect relationships, but the attempt is made to account for the causal relationships as they operate under actual conditions here and now.

The *third way* of demonstration starts from the consideration of the *contingency* which we recognize in the universe and in its every part and explains the "conditioned" nature of things by referring to something which is "unconditioned" or necessary.

The argument proceeds as follows: We are surrounded by beings, large and small, inanimate and animate, irrational and rational, which are all subject to continuous processes of generation and corruption: they *are now,* but they *were not always,* and they *can and will cease to be.* Now if "everything" were of this kind, then the entire cosmos would be deprived of its foundation, and we would be led to the conclusion that at one time nothing at all had existed. That, however, is impossible. For if at one time "nothing at all" had existed, then nothing at all could and would exist today. As we know that this is not so, our initial assumption must be false: something necessary must always have existed and must still exist and must account for the existence of all contingent beings. And as no existent which can cease to exist can contain in itself the reason or cause of its own existence, every contingent

being must derive the reason for its existence from something else. However, it is impossible to lengthen the series of such contingent beings to infinity. For even if we would assume such an infinite series, it would never suffice to account for itself or for any member of the series. Therefore, we must conclude that all contingent beings depend on the existence of a necessary being, a being which exists of its very nature or *whose essence is his existence* (cf. p. 57). And this Necessary Being we call God.

We see that this argument does not proceed (as did the first way) from the phenomena of change, nor (as did the second way) from the facts of actual causal relationships, but from the observation of generation and corruption in finite beings. Considering, as it were, the very nature of finite being and its "conditioned" character, and discovering that it has its necessary support in Infinite Being — this third way may be said to strike the central theme of the five ways of demonstration. In the form of the so-called *cosmological proof* it was strongly reaffirmed by Leibniz and partly endorsed, partly rejected by Kant. In the "Critique of Pure Reason" the argument from contingency appears in the following phrasing: "If something, whatever it be, exists, then it must also be admitted that something exists of necessity. For the contingent exists only by being conditioned by something else as by its cause, and from this cause we must argue further to a cause which in itself is not contingent and, therefore, unconditioned and necessary." But, having gone so far, Kant finds it impossible to conclude from a necessary being to the affirmation of God, the Most Real Being (*ens realissimum*). He sees in such a conclusion a relapse into the fallacy of the ontological "proof" (cf. pp. 73 sq.). However, Kant is unaware that in the Thomistic Third Way no reference whatsoever is made to the Most Real Being (*ens realissimum*) and that, therefore, there is no necessity whatsoever to have recourse to St. Anselm's argument. St. Thomas Aquinas rather demonstrates here and elsewhere that *in the Necessary Being essence and existence are identical* and that for this reason *existence must be of its very nature.*[34]

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[34] *Summa Theologica*, I, 3, a. 4.

The *fourth way* of demonstration is of Platonic origin. It is found with only slight variations in St. Augustine, in Dionysius "the Areopagite," and in St. Albert the Great (1193–1280) and his school. Its conclusiveness was reaffirmed by Descartes and Bossuet (1627–1704).

This time the argument proceeds from multiplicity to unity or *from the varying degrees of perfection* which are perceived in the universe *to the absolute perfection* of its First Cause.

We recall our analysis of the transcendental properties of being—the true, the good, the beautiful, and the one (cf. § 4). We observe that these "transcendentals" are realized in different degrees in those beings which we know from experience. These beings are more or less true, more or less good, more or less beautiful, more or less unified. But while there are in these different beings such differing degrees of perfection, the transcendental attributes which are common to all classes of beings involve in themselves indeed "more or less" perfection, but *no im*perfection. Thus, we know that there are ascending scales or hierarchical orders of truth, goodness, beauty, and oneness. By speaking of "more or less" we imply an approximation to something which is "most" (true, good, beautiful, one). The fact, however, that these transcendental attributes of being are found in different beings in varying degrees suggests that none of these beings can in and by itself account for the possession of these limited degrees of perfection, unless they all had received them from a being which possesses these perfections in an unlimited degree. The very fact that there are gradations of the same perfections in different beings indicates that these perfections have their source not in these beings themselves but in something else. For if each of these beings had its perfections by virtue of its own nature, then it would be difficult to see how and why different beings should share in the same perfections in different degrees. For that which is of a being's very nature is possessed in the fullest degree and not "more or less." Whatever has its ground and reason in the nature of a thing has also its fullest measure of realization in that same thing. It is therefore necessary to find the ultimate source of the sameness of these graduated perfections in all beings, and we can only find this source in a being whose very nature *is* all these

perfections and thereby fully accounts for them wherever they occur, i.e., a being which *is* Being, Truth, Goodness, Beauty, and Oneness itself. And such a being we call God.

In this way we have now arrived at the first member in the series of perfections, at that Absolute Being which by its very nature possesses every perfection which all other beings have only "borrowed" in a greater or less degree. We have also gained a deeper understanding of the Platonic idea of that ontological "participation," by means of which the multiple is related to the One. We have discovered that unity of plenitude from which multiplicity radiates in ever so many ways and directions: "All those beings which in different ways participate in the perfection of Being, must of necessity be caused by a First Being which possesses being in its plenitude. This is the reason why Plato remarked that unity must precede multiplicity, and why Aristotle called that which is being and truth in the highest degree, the cause of all being and of all truth."[35]

We gather, however, from the above quotation that St. Thomas Aquinas went one important step further than Plato. For in Plato's "realm of ideas" are included not only the prototypes of the transcendental attributes of being which, as we have seen (cf. § 4), converge and coincide with being as such, but also the prototypes of the entire realm of concrete material species. St. Thomas Aquinas, on the other hand, ascends beyond the Platonic "realm of ideas" to the "Father of Ideas," i.e., to the source and origin of the transcendentals as well as of everything else. For him, therefore, the transcendentals as well as the concrete material species have their ultimate ground in the infinite knowledge and wisdom of the Divine Mind.

The *fifth way* of demonstration has as its empirical basis the *ordered multiplicity* of things and arrives by rational argument at *a supreme ordering intelligence.* It is often called *the argument from design* and is also known as the *teleological proof* (τέλος = purpose, end). Its conclusive strength derives from the *principle of finality or final causality* (cf. pp. 66 sq.).

In the concise formulation of St. Thomas Aquinas the argu-

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[35] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* I, 44, a. 1.

ment is stated as follows: "We observe that things which lack thought and cognition, as for example, natural bodies, act in view of some definite end. This appears from the fact that they always or at least most of the time act in the same way in order to attain to that which is best for them. From this it is clear that they attain their end not by chance but rather by following a certain intention. But those things which lack thought and knowledge could not strive toward an end unless they were directed to it by some force or being which possesses knowledge and intelligence, as the arrow is directed by the archer. Therefore, an intelligent being must exist, by which all natural things are directed toward their end. And this being we call God.[36]

This closely knit presentation of the problem is not immediately evident in all its ramifications without some further analysis.

We start out from the common experience that there is finality in nature, i.e., that we find among beings which lack intelligence an interrelation of means and ends, and that certain means are utilized to attain certain ends. There is in nature a finality of being (static teleology), a finality of action (dynamic teleology), and a finality of becoming (genetic teleology). We know by observation that certain inanimate beings and certain animate (but unintelligent) beings behave and act in identical ways, in accordance with their respective natures. From this we conclude that there is in such beings a certain urge or "intention" to achieve definite results or to attain certain ends. This adaptation or suitability of means to ends, however, presupposes some thinking and willing force or being which designs these intentional interrelations, fitting means to ends and realizing the immanent tendencies of natural beings.

Thus we see that the central concept of this argument is *the principle of finality*. The "end" designates the full realization of tendencies which are found in the nature of things and which are gradually actualized in the processes of "becoming." From this immanent or "internal" finality we may distinguish an "external" finality which refers to the ordered

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[36] *Summa Theologica*, I, q. 2, a. 3.

relations which exist among natural beings and which make it possible for us to group them together in different classes. From the point of view of usefulness or serviceableness, for example, there exist definite relations between inorganic and organic nature, between plants and brutes, between brutes and men — relations which in themselves are indicative of an hierarchical order, expressed in terms of greater or less value and perfection.

It is undeniable, on the other hand, that, as far as "external" finality is concerned, there is also found in nature much apparent incongruity or inappropriateness which seems to militate against the idea of an intelligently ordered and directed cosmos. However, it would be very unrealistic indeed to accept the contention of philosophic pessimism that these phenomena of seeming disorder are so prevalent in nature and life that they outweigh the phenomena of order and design. The phenomena of seeming disorder are the exception rather than the rule. Furthermore, it should be taken into consideration that something may appear to be without purpose or meaning to our limited intellectual comprehension, while in a larger context or when referred to the totality of means and ends or when viewed by a less limited intelligence, it may have both meaning and value.

The appeal to chance as a possible explanation of the apparent order of the universe has already been rejected (cf. p. 68). The attempt to eliminate purposes and ends from nature and life must of necessity lead to the annihilation of any and all meaningful activities.

We have tried to demonstrate that every sort of "becoming" has its ground in a passage from potency to actuality, that only the "actual" (i.e., that which acts or is "in act") can "actualize," and that nothing can produce this actualization of and by its own nature. For this reason we now feel justified in calling "the end" the cause of all causes.[37]

The appeal to the facts of cosmic evolution only serves to substantiate the idea of finality. The evolution in the universe may be traced step by step from the lowest and simplest forms of being to an ever greater complexity, differentiation, and

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[37] Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I–II, q. 1, a. 2.

refinement of the organism, whereby the later stages always presuppose the earlier ones. When finally the "typical" form or the species of the organism is fully developed, we discover in it the realization of the elements of an immanent original preformation. Contributory factors to this end are the processes of fertilization, the evolution of a structural pattern, and the differentiation of the organic system with its large complex of ordered functional activities (respiration, nutrition, metabolism, regenerative functions, etc.).

From all these observable orderly and purposive relations and organized functions and activities we now conclude that the material structure and composition of the universe cannot possibly account for the actuality of all these phenomena. Purpose and order are character marks of mind and will, and where there is purpose and order there must, therefore, be thought and volition: "The attempt to reduce the finality in the universe to mechanical necessity is tantamount to saying: the arrow need not be shot by an archer taking aim to hit the target, since it is hurled toward the target by the elasticity of the bow."[38] It is necessary then to infer from the observed finality in the universe the reality of a transcendent intelligence and will. Our demonstration has thus led us to the recognition that God exists as the Supreme and Universal End and the First Ruling Intelligence of all things.

In reviewing the five ways of the demonstration of God's existence it may be well to stress once more the limitations which of necessity attach to such an undertaking. God as He is in Himself remains veiled in a dark mystery. We have merely tried to show the several ways in which He has unveiled Himself in the works of His creation. And, secondly, we hope to have proved that the created universe, not being self-explanatory, stands in need of an absolute raison d'être, of a necessary and infinitely potent support. Thus, while we do not claim to have contributed to the comprehension of God's essence, we have tried to demonstrate the *necessity of His existence*. And while for a limited intelligence as ours it will always remain impossible to comprehend the incomprehensible, it is nevertheless possible to understand and explain the necessary existence of that which as such is incompre-

[38] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, q. 103, a. 1.

hensible, to recognize that there is an incomprehensible being which accounts for and makes more or less intelligible all other beings. For without God the world could only be viewed as an accidentally accrued and, in the last analysis, meaningless texture of nonentities (i.e., it could not be explained at all), while with God the frail contingency of beings is anchored, sheltered, and vitally sustained in the fatherly embrace of an Eternal Being.

§ 13. The Nature of Man

THE fifth way of the demonstration of God's existence brought into plain view the structure of an ordered universe and pointed to the Eternal Reason working in it and behind it. We have thus recognized this universe as composed of graduated genera and species of beings which, individually and collectively, reveal in their natures varying degrees of the absolute perfection of their creator. The more intimately these created beings participate in the perfection of the Supreme Being, the higher is their rank in the hierarchically ordered universe. In this universal order of creation everything is relative or contingent with regard to that Being which alone is absolute and necessary and which as such absolutely transcends the confines and natures of all classes of created beings.

In this graduated and ascending scale of beings, a rather unique position seems to have been allotted to that being which we call human. *Man* quite evidently is deeply interwoven with the various gradations of being, and while in some respects he appears to master and direct other types and classes of beings, in other respects he depends on them and is subservient to them. And while he possesses certain powers or faculties which clearly mark him off from other created beings, he shares with all of them their relativity and contingency with regard to the Absolute and Necessary Being.

The ability to think or to philosophize being unquestionably one of the prerogatives of man, it is natural for the philosopher, in availing himself of this privilege, to try to answer for himself and for his fellow humans the question: "What is man?"

The main tenets of any philosophical system depend to a large extent on a philosopher's idea of God, but they depend equally on his definition of man (cf. p. 14), this definition expressing and bearing in itself a necessary relation to the idea of God.

What, then, is man? Taking into account the results of our previous metaphysical analyses and considering all that we can know and learn about man rationally and experimentally, it would seem that man's place is in the very center of the universe. While, on the one hand, he unites and collects in himself the simpler and more material grades and types of being (mineral, vegetative, sentient), he mirrors, on the other hand, the more complex and spiritual types of being. For St. Thomas Aquinas as well as for Pascal man marks the point of intersection of matter and spirit, both of which are united and reflected in him as in a focus. This rather mysterious union of two seemingly mutually exclusive principles is usually described by saying that man is composed of *body and soul.* If then we want to understand the nature of man, it will be necessary to explain what is meant by these terms and to describe as adequately as possible the way in which body and soul are joined together in the human being.

A) *THE LIFE PRINCIPLE AND ITS FUNCTIONS*

The gradations of being, into which man's nature is somehow and somewhere inserted and integrated, reach from pure potency to pure actuality. These ontological gradations lie, as it were, between two extremes: at the one end of the scale is that which is *completely indefinite* because it lacks any actual determination, while at the other end of the scale is that which is *absolutely infinite* because of its being unlimited by any kind of potentiality. The completely indetermined and indefinite is unknowable because of its neighborhood to nothingness, while the essence of the Infinite is unknowable because of its unlimited plenitude.

Confining our attention to the total realm of animate beings, we are able to distinguish three different classes: (1) those beings which are purely vegetative; (2) those beings which are vegetative and sentient; (3) those beings which are vegetative, sentient, and rational or intellectual. All the members

of these classes of beings have in common some vital principle of activity or motion which in a most general sense we may call their *life principle.* This life principle, however, is found in differing degrees in different classes of beings, and the life of these beings is the more perfect the more autonomously they possess and exercise this vital activity or motion. While plants undoubtedly are vitally active in the processes of nutrition and growth, their activities are initiated not by themselves but result from their obedience to natural laws. Brutes, like plants, are vitally active, but their activities involve the utilization of innate natural tendencies and instincts as well as of certain forms of sense knowledge which facilitate and aid their movements toward specific ends. Rational beings, like plants and brutes, are vitally active, but their activities are almost entirely autonomous in that they derive in their larger part from the *intellectual knowledge* of freely chosen ends and from the free adoption of means proportionate to these ends. An absolutely autonomous activity can only be predicated of God, i.e., of an infinite being whose incentives and ends have their ground, their being, and their consummation entirely within its own nature.

The life principle which is revealed in the varying activities or movements of different grades of being is what Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas have designated as *the soul.* And all the activities which flow from "the soul" of a being testify once more to the universal tendency of being and goodness to diffuse and communicate themselves. It is this "soul" or the principle of a being's life which constitutes that being in its species and in its substantial form, i.e., in the substantial unity of its nature and in all those lawful activities or movements which this nature entails, such as are involved in the processes of adaptation, evolution, regeneration, and procreation.

If we define with Aristotle the soul as "the first act (i.e., the substantial form) of a physical body,"[39] we imply in this definition that the soul is the activating principle of a physical body. It seems necessary, however, to specify further the nature of the functions of soul and body and their respective share in the activities of animate beings. For Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas soul and body are united like act and potency

[39] *De anima,* I, 412, b. 5.

and like form and matter, to form one substantially unified and animated body. The question as to how "soul" is conjoined with and moves "body" becomes meaningless as soon as it is recognized that soul and body form one unified (though composite) being and that consequently the activity of the soul is an activity of the composite "soul-body." The soul then may be described as an active "form" which acts in and through the specific nature of the composite or "mixed" organic being. As the first principle of the composite's activity the soul determines the vital motion as well as the end of the organism.

By insisting on the *vital union of soul and body* in the composite animate being, Aristotelian and Thomistic psychology avoids the extreme positions of monistic materialism, on the one hand, and of dualistic, Platonic or Cartesian, spiritualism, on the other.

B) *WHAT IS KNOWLEDGE?*

Among the three classes of animate beings — vegetative, sentient, and rational — the members of the second and third group possess the *faculty of cognition.* They are not only vitally moving and active organisms but knowing organisms as well, i.e., they are subjects which can and actually do know certain objects. The question then necessarily arises: "What is knowledge, and how does it come about?"

In a very general sense it may be said that in the process of knowing an expansion of being takes place, making it possible for one specific nature (the knower) to experience and share in another specific nature (the known). This definition of knowledge is implied in the saying of Aristotle, reaffirmed by St. Thomas Aquinas, that "the soul is [or can become] in some way all things" (*anima est quodammodo omnia*).[40] The subject which receives into itself the "form" of the object in some way "becomes" that object, a process resulting in a mysterious synthesis of the two natures of the knower and the known. It may thus be seen why all knowledge acquired by a knowing subject leads to an expansion or enlargement of this subject's being.

Now evidently — in the case of a subject's cognizing mate-

[40] *Summa Theologica,* I, q. 14, a. 1.

rial objects — what is received by the knowing subject is not the material object itself but its dematerialized or *immaterial form.* Such an immaterial form, however, can only be received by a subject which itself is to some extent immaterial. Thus, an animal, "knowing" some other animal or some article of food, does not receive into itself these objects in their material entities unless or until the animal were to devour these objects and thereby absorb them physically and materially. Such physical absorption, however, is something entirely different from what may be called a "cognitive union" with material objects.

The observation that in the process of knowing the subject in a way "becomes" the object suggests that the mere faculty of cognition is related to actual knowledge as potency is related to act or as matter is related to form. Thus we may say that the faculty of cognition is "actualized" by the form of the cognized object, and before this actualization took place the faculty was in the state of pure potency. This inner relationship between possible and actual knowledge — a knowledge "actualized" by its objects — is indicative of the profound kinship which exists between all the subjects and all the objects of knowledge, a kinship which led Aristotle[41] and St. Thomas Aquinas[42] to the assertion that — because of this close interrelation and correlation between being and knowing — without a subject there would be no object. This statement, however, should not be misconstrued as implying some form of philosophical idealism. It rather rests on the basic Thomistic conviction that all things are knowable only because they are ontological manifestations of God's supreme knowledge. Therefore, without the Eternal Ideas of the Divine subject there would not only be no knowable objects but no objects at all: "God's knowledge is the cause of all things" (*scientia Dei est causa rerum*).[43] Thus we see that the knowing subject and the known object are akin because both participate in the plenitude of Transcendental Being. And in the process of cognition the subject mysteriously "becomes" the object, and the object "becomes" the subject without either of them losing their identity.

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[41] IV Phys., lect. 23.
[42] *Summa Theologica,* I, 14, a. 8.
[43] *Summa Theologica, loc. cit.*

C) *INTELLECTUAL KNOWLEDGE*

Among the three classes of animate beings — vegetative, sentient, rational — the members of the third group possess not only sense knowledge but also intellectual knowledge. While all animals have sense knowledge, only man — the rational animal — has intellectual knowledge. While sense knowledge extends to and includes all the particular corporeal objects which act upon the sense organs, intellectual knowledge extends to and includes all the forms or essences which are abstracted from corporeal objects. What then precisely do we mean by intellectual knowledge?

To answer this question we must first of all inquire into the *nature of the intellect.* We have seen that knowledge in general is consummated in a kind of vital union between the knower and the known, a union in which the subject in a way "becomes" the object without losing its own identity. But if the subject is potentially capable of knowing or *"becoming"* all things, it cannot *be* actually any of them. Now the intellect, as is evidenced by experience, can potentially *know or "become"* all corporeal beings, and it therefore cannot actually *be* any of them. In other words, the intellect cannot be corporeal or material. The intellect rather must be some power outside and above material bodies. And the mark of intellectual knowledge is an internal presence of objects freed from the particular individuating characteristics and conditions of time, number, and matter. No organic or material faculty could possibly account for such an abstract knowledge of the natures or essences of things. We therefore conclude that *the intellect must be incorporeal or immaterial.*

It should be emphasized, on the other hand, that all intellectual knowledge, i.e., the knowledge of universal ideas, natures, or essences, has its *roots in sense knowledge.* The intellect, confronted with a multitude of sensible objects, distinguishes between substances and accidents, causes and effects, means and ends. Applying the immanent first principles of thinking and being (the principles of identity, contradiction, excluded middle, sufficient reason [cf. § 3]), the intellect proceeds, by means of abstraction, analysis, synthesis, and analogy, to the formation of concepts, judgments, and conclu-

sions, and in this way it eventually acquires its knowledge of material essences as well as of suprasensible realities (the soul, the existence of God, the moral law, etc.). The intellect thus, by virtue of its inherent powers, rises above the sensible and acquires mastery over it.

The insistence on the metabiological nature of the intellect, on the one hand, and on its being involved in biological and organic movements and activities, on the other, will help us avoid the two pitfalls of integral materialism and exaggerated spiritualism. We know from medical and psychiatric research to what extent the intellect shares in the health or disease of the physical organism. While then it would obviously be a mistake to call the intellect an organic faculty, it would be equally erroneous to describe it as a faculty which is unrelated to or dissociated from the organism. *Hylomorphism* or the *theory of matter and form* (cf. § 8) offers, if applied to the mind-body problem, a "via media" in a "formal materialism" in which both the intellect and the corporeal organism receive their due.[44] We arrive then at the conclusion that the intellect for the exercise of its proper functions needs and uses the entire sensory organism of the body.

However, in order to be able to abstract the universal natures or essences from concrete material objects, the intellect must not only passively receive sense stimuli from without but it must also respond to these stimuli actively from within. The intellect, once it is "informed" by the senses, immediately begins to react and in turn to work upon the material furnished by the senses. This reactive spontaneity of the intellect is attributed by Thomistic philosophy to a special intellectual force which is properly called the "active intellect" (*intellectus agens*). It is the function of the "active intellect" to "dematerialize" the material objects as they are presented by sense perception and imagination, i.e., to abstract from them their universal forms, ideas, or natures.

This rather complicated process of intellectual cognition may be further clarified by the following consideration: The concretely existing thing is itself the actualization and individualization of a universal form or idea; it is an idea em-

[44] The term *"formal materialism"* is used by Mortimer J. Adler in his constructive criticism of Marxian materialism. Cf. *What Man Has Made of Man* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1937), p. 166 sq.

bedded in the pure receptivity of matter. As an individual and concrete thing it no longer possesses that universality, necessity, and transcendence which could make it a proper object of intellectual knowledge. If then this individual thing is to be revived in the intellect in the universal and essential qualities of its nature, it must be "disembodied," i.e., it must reverse its "descent" into matter by an "ascent" from material individuation to ideal universality and transcendence. And it is the function of the "active intellect" to "draw out" (abstract) of the individual its universal idea or form. St. Thomas Aquinas, for whom, as we have seen (cf. p. 94), God is the ultimate cause of all intellectual knowledge, and for whom every active principle in the last analysis depends on the "first actuality" of God, describes the "active intellect" as "a light derived from God" (*lumen derivatum a Deo*).

D) *THE HUMAN SOUL*

We are now in a position to resume our discussion of the life principle in animate beings and to apply the information we have gained on the nature of the intellect to our inquiry into *the life principle in man,* i.e., *the human soul.*

The life principle in man differs from the life principle in other animals in that it is a principle of intellectual activity and in that such an activity is indicative of a new positive perfection or actual power, of which other animals are devoid. This new power manifests itself in the capacity for forming universal and immaterial concepts (faculty of abstraction); in the capacity for expressing these concepts in the symbols of language (faculty of speech); in the capacity for creating definite but varying forms and patterns of individual and social life and civilization; and in the capacity for acquiring a knowledge and consciousness of one's own self (faculty of reflection and introspection).

If such are the activities and manifestations of the life principle in man, there must be a corresponding and underlying principle of being, from which these activities emanate; for a thing always acts in accordance with what it is (*operari sequitur esse*). And since these activities obviously do not and cannot have their raison d'être in the material body, there must exist *an incorporeal and substantial principle of intel-*

lectual operations. And this principle we call *the human soul:* "That which is the immanent principle of our intellectual operations (and which we call the human soul) is a certain incorporeal and subsistent (independent, substantial) principle."[45]

Such a conclusion naturally cannot be admitted by those philosophers who either deny the reality of substances altogether (phenomenalism: Locke, Hume, Taine, etc.) or attribute substantiality only to the Divine or Absolute Mind (pantheistic monism: Spinoza, Hegel, E. v. Hartmann, etc.). Both these views, however, seem to be at odds with common sense as well as with the testimony of human consciousness which strongly affirms the substantial unity of the individual soul as a subsistent source of its multiform activities.

The individual human soul, being contingent, and having like all created substances, its beginning in time, might conceivably also be of only limited and temporal duration. From the mere concept of the soul as the life principle in man, its incorruptibility or immortality does not necessarily follow. It is for this reason that Plato's arguments for the immortality of the human soul[46] are unconvincing. For him the soul's kinship with the Divine, with the realm of Eternal Ideas, establishes and guarantees its incorruptibility, and from his belief in the pre-existence of the soul before its descent into the body, he deduces its after-existence. Logically inconclusive is his further contention that the soul can never die because *life* is its essential immanent principle. Plato is on much safer ground when he points to the substantial unity of the soul, as evidenced in the way in which it rules over the body.

Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas base their arguments on the demonstration of the simplicity and immateriality of the human soul, on the independence or autonomy of some of its functions and activities, on its capacity for embracing timeless truth, and on its unquenchable desire for complete and permanent happiness or beatitude.

One of the several *metaphysical arguments for the immortality of the human soul* is based on its substantiality, sim-

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[45] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* I, q. 75, a. 2.

[46] In the Platonic Dialogues "Phaidon," "Phaidrus," "Menon," and the "Republic."

plicity, immateriality, and spirituality: We have seen that the activities of sense perception are acts of the composite "animate body" or "embodied soul" (cf. pp. 92 sq.), and as the modes of action always correspond to the modes of being, a life principle which does not subsist and act independently does not require an independent mode of being. Thus the soul of brutes is entirely wrapped up, so to speak, in the composite "soul-body," and the dissolution or corruption of the composite involves body and soul, the latter being once more reduced to the state of the pure potentiality of matter.

The human soul, on the other hand, exercising an intellectual activity of its own, is a "pure form" (*forma sui generis*), and requires for its functions and activities a correspondingly independent or autonomous mode of being. Thus the destruction of the human body does not involve the soul which, not depending in its subsistence on the body, survives the corruption of the corporeal organism. Not being composed of quantitative material parts, the human soul bears within itself no principle of disintegration or corruptibility.

But is it not conceivable that the human soul might be annihilated by the very cause which gave it being, viz., the efficient causality of God? But such a cessation of Divine causality and activity could hardly be reconciled with the wisdom of an infinitely perfect being. For such an action on the part of the Deity would imply the destruction of an intellectual nature which as such was initially endowed with the character of perpetuity. To enhance the appeal of this line of reasoning, St. Thomas Aquinas quotes Dionysius "the Areopagite" to this effect: "For the sake of the radiance of Divine Goodness the intelligible and intelligent substances have acquired being and are and live and have unceasing and undiminishing life, being devoid of the otherwise universal corruptibility and death, and being raised above every unstable flux and change."[47]

A second metaphysical argument for the immortality of the human soul is based on the innate tendency of all being to endure, on what Schopenhauer (1788–1860) called the universal "will to live" (*Wille zum Leben*). In beings endowed with the faculty of cognition (sense knowledge and/or intel-

[47] *Summa Contra Gentiles*, II, 55; and Dionysius, *De Divinis Nominibus*, IV, I, 1.

lectual knowledge) this tendency assumes the form of a desire. But whereas brutes know only individual or particular things and, therefore, also desire only the individual or particular, the rational animal, being capable of knowing universals, comprehends and desires *being as such*. Man not only desires life here and now, but he desires *life as such*. And such a desire of human nature for permanent duration cannot be in vain: it achieves its fruition in the immortal life of the human soul.

A third argument, partly metaphysical and partly moral, represents a further elaboration of some particular aspects of the second. The German poet *Goethe* (1749–1832) wrote: "My conviction of our immortality is derived from the idea of activity; for if I strive and work unceasingly to the very end of my days, then nature is obliged to assign to me another form of existence as soon as my present form of life can no longer support my spirit."[48] Nature, of course, cannot supply, but God can make good a desire which He Himself has implanted in the soul.

The main basis of this argument is the natural desire of man for the true and the good and for the lasting happiness resulting from the attainment and inalienable possession of truth and goodness. Such goals or ends, however, elevate the metaphysical and moral desire of man above and beyond the world of matter and sense to the realm of permanent being and value. And a desire for such ends, if it is essentially innate in the human soul, cannot be in vain but rather testifies to the incorruptibility and immortality of man's soul.

If then the human soul is immortal, the question as to the nature of this immortality or as to the nature of the future existence of the soul arises immediately. Is philosophy as such in a position to offer any valid answer?

If the soul really survives the death of the body, it would seem that the human being is divided on the occasion of physical death and therefore less complete than it was in its actual life on this earth. Plato tried to resolve this difficulty by *defining the soul as the complete and true man* and by regarding the body merely as an organ of the soul and not as an essential constituent part of man. Christian theology, on

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[48] J. P. Eckermann, *Conversations with Goethe* (Feb. 4, 1829).

the other hand, teaches the *resurrection of the flesh* and therewith the eventual *reunion of body and soul.* Philosophy, however, cannot have recourse to the source of revelation but, being a rational science, has to work out its own solution independently.

Now all philosophy knows is that man dies; it does not know whether or not his body is ever restored or regenerated. However, philosophy also knows, as we have seen, that not everything of man and in man dies: it knows that the soul, the very life principle of his body, survives. But what shall or can we say of the activities of a "disembodied" soul? Are such activities even conceivable? We know that the soul is so enmeshed in the functions and organs of the body that physical disease may partially or wholly destroy the activity of the intellectual principle in man, by impairing the instrumental conditions on which sensation, imagination, memory, and all normal experience depend.

St. Thomas Aquinas attempts to answer this pertinent question by distinguishing between psychological activities whose functioning depends on the body, and specifically intellectual activities which as such are independent of the body: "Those activities which depend on the body, will perish: such is the fate of sense experience, imagination, actual memory, and the passions; but the specifically intellectual activities, such as thought and volition, do not perish. . . . They no longer find the conditions of their activities in the functioning of the senses but are directed towards higher actualities. . . . It is, however, to be noted that the disembodied soul differs from the soul which is united with the body in both its activity and its being. For everything acts in accordance with what it is; and although the being of the human soul, as long as it is united with the body, subsists independently, the body nevertheless provides for it a certain foundation and support."[49]

Thus it may be said that the intellectual activities of the disembodied soul will be directed toward God, the absolute source of being and knowledge, without making use of the intermediary sources of sense experience and imagination. For the primary source of all intelligibility is above material nature and beyond that knowledge which is mediated by the senses.

[49] *Summa Contra Gentiles,* I, 81.

E) *SOUL AND BODY*

Our foregoing considerations have led us to the conclusion that there are in man two realities — soul and body. These two are united in such a way as to form one being called man, and it now will be our task to determine the nature of that union or, in other words, to explain how it can be that immaterial and material being, qualitative unextended being and quantitative extended being are joined into one.

Such an explanation has been attempted by different philosophical schools and systems, proposing in one way or other either a monistic or a dualistic solution of the problem.

Psychological monism acknowledges that soul and body differ phenomenally in their modes of action but maintains that nevertheless they are essentially identical, being two modalities or manifestations of one and the same principle. This principle is either defined as matter (materialistic monism) or as mind or spirit (spiritualistic and idealistic monism), whereby the term "mind" or "spirit" is usually derived from some more or less pantheistically conceived Absolute Mind or World Soul, as in the systems of Plotinus (203–269), Spinoza, Schelling, Hegel, etc. Materialistic monism regards mind or spirit as a form or appearance of matter, while spiritualistic and idealistic monism regards matter either as a mode of spirit or merely as an illusion. The monistic explanation in either of these forms appears inadmissible on the bases of our previous argumentation.

Psychological dualism, on the other hand, holds that soul and body are two co-ordinated but independent and essentially different realities. For Plato soul and body are only accidentally united, as a pilot is united with his ship or as a charioteer is united with his chariot. The soul is temporarily imprisoned in the body and is truly itself only when freed from the material weight of the body. An equally extreme dualism is maintained by Descartes, for whom soul and body are two complete, separate, and independent substances, the nature of the soul being pure thought, the nature of the body being pure extension. For Descartes, therefore, the body is nothing but a soulless mechanism or machine. The "occasionalists," Geulincx and Malebranche, accepting the principles of Cartesian

dualism but finding it, like Descartes himself, impossible to account for the interaction of soul and body in the sensitive and intellectual operations of man, called upon the direct intervention of God: the mechanical movements of the human body "occasion" God to cause the corresponding movements or activities of the human soul. Such an "occasionalism," however, annihilating the efficient causality of creatures, must logically lead and has actually always led to some form of integral pantheism.

In all these dualistic systems a theory of *psychophysical parallelism* is implied. Leibniz, too, in his idea of a "pre-established harmony" among all the "monads" of the universe, with God as its author, assumes a parallelism rather than a mutual interaction of physical and psychological processes. Psychophysical parallelism was methodically and systematically developed in the nineteenth century, especially by the German philosophers G. T. Fechner (1801–1887) and W. Wundt (1832–1920) and exerted great influence on experimental psychology. This theory, denying any causal influence of mind on body and vice versa, asserts that the two series of mental and physical operations are exactly parallel but causally self-sufficient and independent of each other. However, both common sense and scientific psychology controvert such an artificial and arbitrary explanation of the mind-body problem.

In the Aristotelian-Thomistic views on the union of soul and body we find once more an avoidance of the extreme positions of spiritualism and materialism. The proposed solution satisfies both common sense and science. And once again the ontological concepts of form and matter serve to throw light on the intimate and vital communion which exists between the soul and its body. St. Thomas Aquinas follows Aristotle in defining *the human soul as the "act" or substantial form of an organic body.*[50] This means that man is neither exclusively body nor exclusively soul but a composite of both, in which body is related to soul as matter to its form.

In the human composite the soul is the form or the life principle which makes man the being he is: it is the root principle of his functions and activities, not only of his thought

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[50] *Summa Theologica,* I, q. 75, a. 2 and 3.

and volition but also of his sensitive and vegetative functions. If this life principle is withdrawn, these functions cease, and the human body is no longer the human being. It is therefore not the human soul which thinks and wills, and it is not the human body which develops and grows and feels, but it is always the entire *man,* the soul-body composite, which exercises all of these functions.

Furthermore: from the fact that neither the soul nor the body is the *man,* it follows that *both the soul and the body are incomplete substances* and that *only the composite "man" is a complete and unified substance.*

Finally: if the soul is the substantial form of the human body, it is necessary that the body which is "informed" by the soul be proportionate or commensurate to its soul. And as it is matter which individualizes form (cf. pp. 44 and 59), we conclude that *it is the body which individualizes the soul materially,* in accordance with the body's physical proportions and conditions, as determined by material generation and the laws of heredity; *it is the spirit,* however, and, more precisely, the creative act and causality of *the Divine Spirit which individualizes man formally in his spirituality* and imparts to him the character of personality.

Thus the proportions and conditions of human bodies "occasion" the specific character of the form or soul which is to be united to that particular body. The specific individual character of the soul therefore depends on the material potentialities which the body, according to its physical constitution, can provide for it. And as the parents are the generators or givers of the child's body, they also are preparing and in a certain sense "conditioning" the child's soul. From this conditioning material "fixation" of the form character of the individual soul it may be concluded that, even after its withdrawal from the body, the soul retains that measure and form which it had in its embodied state: it remains individualized, by virtue of that same matter to which it owed its original bodily individuation and whose potentialities the soul had informed and actualized.

F) *THE ORIGIN OF THE HUMAN SOUL*

Our last question concerns the origin of the human soul.

This question might logically be asked either at the beginning or at the end of a discussion of the nature of the human soul. We relegate it to the end, because this question becomes meaningful only after we have recognized and admitted that the human soul is a spiritual form and an individual substance and not a derivative of matter or of the body.

The history of philosophic and philosophico-religious thought shows that the ideas relating to the origin of the human soul vary greatly. We are able, however, to distinguish four major theories:

1) *Theory of pre-existence and transmigration* (*metempsychosis*). Plato took over from Pythagoras († *circa.* 497 B.C.) the idea that the human souls, once created in a certain number, migrate from body to body to atone for some mysterious guilt associated with their pre-existence. Similar convictions prevail in the teachings of Hindoo and Buddhist thought and in the doctrines of the theosophists. Now if it is admitted that body and soul together form one essentially united composite, then it is impossible for the soul to become essentially united or related to more than one body. On the basis of the Aristotelian and Thomistic explanation of the soul-body relationship the theory of transmigration is therefore unacceptable.

2) *The Theory of Emanation.* According to Plotinus and his school of Neo-Platonism, the human soul is an emanation of the world soul which in turn emanates from a supreme spiritual principle of oneness, goodness, beauty, brightness, and power. For the Neo-Platonist, matter is the darkness of absolute not-being or pure negation and privation and therefore identical with evil as such (spiritual monism), and the human soul, disengaging itself from matter by the arduous practices of asceticism, returns eventually to its original source. Similar theories of emanation were espoused by the gnostic and Manichaean sects of Christian antiquity. Emanationist likewise is Leibniz's "theory of involution," according to which the individual human souls are "enveloped" or "involved" in the soul of the first man, being developed or "evolved" in the successive processes of generation. Schopenhauer and E. von Hartmann, partly under the influence of Buddhist thought, also taught a kind of emanation in which and by which the pre-existing souls emerge from a subcon-

scious to a conscious state. Viewing emanationism critically, it must be said that it can be defended only on the presupposition that spiritual beings are divisible and therefore can give forth parts of their own substance. This presupposition, however, is inadmissible on the bases of our previous considerations.

3) *The Theory of Generation.* The advocates of the theory of generation maintain that the human soul originates as the effect of and in conjunction with an act of material generation and that this act of generation is its only efficient cause. It is said that the infant souls "emanate" from the parent souls by virtue of the "plastic force" of the parental germ. This theory denies implicitly or explicitly the substantiality, immateriality, spirituality, and simplicity of the human soul. It also runs counter to the law of causality which precludes the possibility of a material cause producing a spiritual effect.

4) *The Theory of Creation.* According to St. Thomas Aquinas, the mode of "becoming" must correspond to the mode of being.[51] If then the human soul is a spiritual being, intrinsically independent of material causation, the mode of its origin or its "becoming" must likewise be independent of material conditions. Therefore, a purely material change or transformation — such as is implied in an act of physical generation — could never account for the "becoming" of a human soul. Nevertheless, we know that the soul, having its natural mode of existence in the body, must have had a beginning no less than the body with which it forms a substantial union. Such a beginning, however, having its cause neither in the soul itself nor in matter, must be an "absolute" beginning. Such an "absolute" beginning of the limited and finite being of the human soul must have its raison d'être in the Absolute Being of the First Cause, i.e., in God. The explanation by way of creation, therefore, concludes that the human soul is created by God and "infused" into the human body. This is what Aristotle had in mind when he said that at the time of the material generation of the human individual the soul comes into the body "from outside as through a door" (θύραθεν), to unite itself with a predisposed matter. Thus, in the generation of a human being two generative

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[51] *Summa Theologica,* I, 90, a. 2.

principles concur: the act of material human generation and the creative activity of God. The parents, in other words, cooperate with the First Cause of all being in the generation of the complete individual substance called "man," a process in which the activities of the secondary causes are accompanied, embraced, supported, and supplemented by the all-pervasive vital activity of the First Cause.

Chapter Two

HUMAN ACTION AND MORAL VALUES

(Ethics)

§ 14. Thinking and Doing (Metaphysics and Ethics)

IN OUR metaphysical analysis we have recognized man as a being composed of body and soul, placed in the very center of the universe, at a point where matter and spirit intersect (cf. p. 91). We tried to understand and to describe as nearly as possible the nature of these two constituent parts of the human composite, and it now becomes our task to study in some detail the modes of action of a being thus composed.

Speaking in a most general sense, we may say that human nature is like the rest of created natures in that they all follow the fundamental laws of being. These laws can be discovered by exploring the nature of being as such as expressed in the graduated order of beings. And as all beings act in accordance with their natures (*operari sequitur esse*), we can best understand the meaning of the manifold activities of different beings by referring these activities directly to their physical and metaphysical roots in the structure and constitution of their natures.

Human activities or acts, accordingly, must likewise be regarded as flowing directly from the physical and metaphysical roots of *human* nature. But while subrational creatures are guided to the attainment of their natural ends by the wisdom of their maker, man — the rational animal — has been given the light of reason and with it and in it the power of self-determination or free choice, enabling and obligating him to be his own guide on the way to the perfection of his nature or his end, while in turn submitting to the divine guidance. He

cannot truly actualize his potentialities as a human being unless he is himself fully aware of his human perfectibility as well as of his limitations and imperfections. Mistaking himself, for example, for either pure spirit or pure matter, he necessarily misjudges his own nature and its possibilities, the means at his disposal and the ends within his reach.

It is at this juncture then that moral philosophy assumes its specific role, linking action to being, doing to thinking, ethics to metaphysics, and posing the all-important question as to how rational animals can guide themselves to their proper ends. And if, as we have said, all activities, including all human acts, flow from the natures of created beings, then it is the order of being and reality which establishes an unshakable norm for the order of action or the moral order. And it is that same order of reality which exacts sanction and retribution whenever its laws are violated in the sphere of human action.

This primacy of the laws of being and reality over the rules of action or conduct extends to every kind of human activity: it applies to individuals and groups, to the spheres of law, politics, and economics, to national and international life. In every field of human behavior and endeavor the ontological order or the order of being sets the rules and norms for the *practical or moral order.* The nature of a thing (its being) determines the modes of its activity, and the supreme categories of being (cf. § 5) retain their validity in the sphere of action.

Now, in our discussion of the law of causality, we have learned that "every agent acts in view of an end" (cf. pp. 66 sq.) and that in doing so it strives for a perfection or "a good," in the attainment of which it actualizes its own potentialities. And we have seen that, while all agents share in this general striving toward perfection, different classes of agents strive for essentially different ends and attain them in different ways. Inanimate beings attain their ends or "their good" in blind obedience to the laws of their natures; beings endowed with sense knowledge strive for the particular ends or "goods" suitable to their natures in following and satisfying their "sense appetite"; and beings endowed with intellectual knowledge or a capacity for comprehending *good as such* are prompted to

strive for their perfection or end by an "intellectual (rational) appetite" commonly designated as volition or "the will." "Some beings," writes St. Thomas Aquinas, "are so constituted by God that they have intellects, and in this sense they are like Him and made in His image. These beings are not only guided to their end but also guide themselves by means of their actions. If, in guiding themselves, they submit to the divine guidance, they reach with this aid the fullness of their perfection; but if they choose to follow some other road, they do not arrive at their destination."[1]

It appears evident then that, as stated above (cf. p. 67), to different classes of agents correspond different kinds of "goods" as well as different "ends." And in accordance with what has been established concerning the relationship existing between being and action, to the greater perfection of being corresponds a more perfect mode of action. And thus we find in the order of action the same hierarchical or graduated scale that we have previously recognized in the order of being: "The less perfect devotes itself to the service of the more perfect. Plants use the soil for nourishment, brutes use the plants, and man makes use of both plants and brutes. It is therefore natural for man to rule over brutes. For that which is inferior is always dominated by that which is superior."[2]

In saying this we merely reaffirm that the "Principle of Order" applies to creatures universally. But while the order of the subrational and irrational universe is entirely in God's keeping, the order in the moral universe or in the various fields of human action is, partially at least, in man's keeping. By cooperating with the universal laws of nature, man can continue and help to perfect by his own acts the order of creation; he can work for the restoration of this order within himself and within the sphere and reach of his activities. Or, by refusing to cooperate with these universal laws, he can create a temporary disorder, first of all within himself, and then, by his disorderly action, in his surrounding world. In the strict sense, therefore, there is no human action which concerns only this or that individual. Each human act rather

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[1] *Summa Contra Gentiles,* III, 1.
[2] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* I, q. 96, a. 1.

forges a chain of cause and effect which exerts its weight on the larger frames of man's earthly relationships.

Taking account then of the great responsibility which attaches to each and every human act, the basic problem of moral philosophy may be stated thus: how can and should man, a creature endowed by the Creator with intellect and free will, conduct his life so as to bring to its fruition that capacity for infinite truth and infinite good which are the ultimate goals of his "intellectual appetite"?

§ 15. Order in Human Action

WE KNOW that in the unity of human nature there is a richness of being which gathers into itself the vegetative and sentient life principle of plants and animals, adding to them the life principles of the intellectual soul which supersedes and spiritually informs the vegetative and sentient activities. Man is at once a vegetative, sentient, and rational creature, but his distinguishing characteristic and the substantial principle of his humanity is the intellectual soul, so that he is man only by virtue of his intellect. His specifically human life is thus constituted by his reason and directed by his rational appetite or will. Any specifically human activity, therefore, is rational activity, and while any nonrational or subrational activities may be considered "acts of man," they cannot be called "human acts" in the strict and proper sense.

Human activity or the activity of a rational animal is carried on by means and under the guidance of what in moral philosophy is known as "the practical reason,"[3] as distinguished from "the theoretical reason" of purely speculative philosophy. It is the dual function of "practical reason" to order or organize man's internal and external world: the world of his own mind and soul and the world of animate and inanimate nature.

It would, however, be a mistake to construe a hostile opposition between the internal world of mind and the external world of nature, as if they were two separate and mutually

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[3] Cf. Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, VI, 5.

exclusive principles. From this mistake resulted Descartes' absolute dualism of thought and extension and Kant's absolute dualism of freedom and nature (cf. pp. 12 sq.). We know, contrariwise, from our metaphysical considerations that there is finality or a striving for an end in nature and in its every part, and that the presence of such a tendency is indicative of "a kind of reason." We also know that all creatures, in accordance with the more or less limited capacities and activities of their natures, partake of the all-pervasive and all-directive Divine Reason. And thus man, who, by virtue of his intellectual soul, has a larger share of participation in the Divine Intellect than either minerals, or plants, or brutes, has not only a greater capacity but a unique responsibility with regard to the rational principle infused in the universe, aiding the latter, as it were, in the attainment of its ends. The ends of man, if they be reasonable, will form a harmonious and integral part within the larger framework of the ends of the created universe. Man, therefore, being himself part of that created universe, can and does by his action exert his influence on nature in general as well as on that part of nature which is his own self. And by exerting this influence rationally, he acts morally. Man, himself created "in the image and likeness of God," can, by means of his rational or moral action, not only order his own inner life so as to make it conform to this divine image but he can in turn, following the guidance of reason, form the earth in his own image.

Man realizes this twofold possibility and task in the two spheres of *doing* (agere) and *making* (facere). He realizes his own self in moral action (ethics), and he actualizes his creative capacities in those external works in which his spiritual and rational self is mirrored: in arts and crafts, in agriculture and city planning, in the trades and professions, in work and play, and in all those other creative activities which in their sum total constitute human culture and civilization. This may serve to illustrate the meaning of the Thomistic definition of *morality* as "right order in the sphere of doing" (*recta ratio agibilium*) and of *art* as "right order in the sphere of making" (*recta ratio factibilium*). In describing human activity in this dual aspect, St. Thomas Aquinas attributes a priority to "doing" over "making," as every creative human activity has its primary

source and its frame of reference in the movement of the human will. This means that in all human doing and making the vital activity invariably proceeds from the intellectual soul in which every specifically human act has its center. Therefore, it may be said that the significance of man's external works receives its measure and its order from the internal principle from which they derive and that the greater or lesser perfection of the inner life of man is reflected in the greater or lesser perfection of both his deeds and his works.

§ 16. The Supreme Value and the End of Ends

AS IN the theoretical order or the order of thought all acts of knowledge have their norm or measure in first principles, so in the practical order or the order of action all individual acts have their norm in the purposes or ends toward which they tend, and all the different purposes or ends in turn must be referred to and depend on one supreme and final end, which we may, therefore, call "the end of ends." Just as in the physical universe there would be no movement and no causality if there were not a Prime Mover and a First Cause, so in the moral universe there would be no human acts in view of specific ends if there were not an "end of ends," imparting meaning to these individual acts or willed movements. Again, as in the demonstration of the existence of God, we are compelled to admit that we cannot have an infinite series of essentially subordinated causes or movements (cf. p. 80): "Without an end of ends nothing would be wanted, no action would have an objective, and the intention (striving) of the agent would never come to rest. And if there were no first member in the series (of acts) directed towards an end, no one would begin to do anything, because no one would ever get beyond making up his mind."[4]

It follows, therefore, that human acts are interlinked among themselves in view of the ends toward which they tend. The human being desires particular means in view of particular

[4] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I–II, q. 1, a. 4.

ends, and he desires these particular ends in view of "the end of ends." Thus all particular ends are linked to the "end of ends" by virtue of a causal relationship, in which the "end of ends" functions as a "first cause," moving to action all the intermediate causes. But if the "end of ends" constitutes the ultimate reason for the desirability of particular ends, the "end of ends" must be of such a kind that it is desired for no ulterior reason, but for its own sake. Such an end, however, is commonly designated as the supreme value or the supreme good, and the joy which results from its attainment is called supreme happiness or beatitude.

In a certain sense it may be said that the supreme good or "the end of ends" is the same for all creatures. They all, in striving for their perfection, follow a natural bent toward the good, and in so doing they more or less remotely imitate and approximate the Supreme Good: "Everything indeed resembles God in so far as it has goodness, and a particular thing is good or valuable in so far as it is a likeness of the Supreme Value. Thus, in approaching the goodness of God, it achieves its own, and not vice versa. The end of ends, then, which all things desire is that they be like God."[5]

Considered, however, from another point of view, there is a vast difference between the way in which the Supreme Good appears to subrational creatures and the way in which it appears to man, the rational animal. And there is the same vast difference in the ways in which the "end of ends" is attained by subrational beings, on the one hand, and by man, on the other. For while all creatures attain to the Supreme Good by a kind of likeness to it, man is made aware of this likeness by his knowledge and by his love, and he is therefore called upon to realize this likeness by the exercise of his intellect and his will, by consciously recognizing the highest value and by freely loving the highest good.

Thus we may conclude that supreme happiness for man results from the perfection of his own nature and from the full satisfaction of its innate "intellectual appetite." In the attainment of the Supreme Good this intellectual appetite comes to rest, having reached its perfect fruition.

This positive characterization of the nature of human happi-

[5] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles,* III, 24.

ness is prepared and implemented by St. Thomas Aquinas by first determining negatively in what the ultimate end of man *cannot* consist.[6] For while it is true that all men are alike in that they strive for a final end, they frequently disagree in their judgment as to what constitutes "the end of ends." Some, for example, believe it to consist in the accumulation of riches, some in the attainment of honor and fame, some in the pleasures of the senses, and still others endow other limited values and goods, such as nationality, race, health, or certain modes and patterns of human behavior and certain forms of human expression and communication (social and economic systems, artistic and aesthetic values, the creation of a world language, etc.) with the commanding dignity of the supreme value and the Supreme Good, substituting such false absolutisms for the true and only Absolute.

Our inquiry into the true nature of man's ultimate end is interested no less in what this end represents objectively than in what it means for man subjectively. Objectively, it must be that good which completely satisfies man's desire. Subjectively, it must be that good whose possession results in man's *lasting happiness.*

If we then try to arrive at an understanding of the nature of the "end of ends" by a process of elimination, we may follow the lead of St. Thomas by beginning with a scrutiny of those goods which are most extrinsic to human nature, viz., money and other external possessions. Can these fully satisfy the will's desire? Can these be those goods whose possession imparts to man lasting happiness? The answer is in the negative. Man's final end and the ground of his lasting happiness can neither consist in such natural riches as food and drink, clothes and luxury goods, houses and estates, nor can it consist in the artificial riches of money. Natural as well as artificial riches are not ends in themselves, but only means to some further ends. Man is not made for them; rather are they made for man, to be used by him for the attainment of other and higher goods. Man being their end, they cannot possibly be man's ultimate end. Man creates the artificial means of money to facilitate the acquisition and exchange of natural goods and possessions, and man desires money in view of

[6] Cf. *Summa Theologica,* I–II, q. 2, a. 1 to 8.

these natural values. And, furthermore, the purchasing power of money is very limited indeed in that it buys only material but never spiritual goods. Therefore, "What does it profit a fool to have money, since he cannot buy wisdom?"[7] Finally, the desire of artificial riches, such as money, "is boundless, but not in the same way as the desire of the Supreme Good. For the more perfectly the Supreme Good is possessed, the more it is loved, and all other things are despised. But with the desire of riches and other temporal goods the opposite is true: for when these are possessed, they are soon despised, and something else is desired . . . because the insufficiency of these goods is better recognized once they are possessed. And this very fact indicates their imperfection and shows that the Supreme Good cannot consist in them."[8]

So we see that neither natural nor artificial riches can be the ultimate terms of human desire or the ultimate guarantors of human happiness. And because the pursuit of wealth is without limit, the man who, owing to a perverted sense of values, substitutes it for the "end of ends" must forever remain restless and dissatisfied.

There are, however, other goods which, though likewise largely external, are to a certain degree also related to the good of the human soul, such as honor, fame, reputation, personal power, influence, and efficiency. Could one of these or their sum total constitute the ultimate end of man? We answer that all these goods and values are so changeable, unstable, undependable, and perishable that they cannot possibly be regarded as the ultimate goods and goals of man. They are good, but not good enough, and while they are at times by-products of happiness, at other times they are sources of harm, sorrow, strife, and misfortune. They are found, furthermore, among the good as well as among the wicked, whereas the Supreme Good and supreme happiness can neither have part with evil nor become the source of evil. When we call these values "goods of fortune," we thereby imply that they are external to human nature and, therefore, external also to man's Supreme Good and his supreme happiness. For the lasting happiness which man desires by virtue of his nature must have its source within and not outside human nature.

[7] Prov. 17:16.

[8] *Summa Theologica, loc. cit.*, a. 2.

It seems certain then that man's final end and the source of his supreme happiness cannot consist in any external goods, but must somehow be rooted in his own nature. And as we know that human nature is a composite of body and soul, this supreme value might conceivably be found either in man's body or in man's soul. The body, however, cannot be the supreme value and final end, since it is itself vitally informed by the soul as its superior principle, and, therefore, all values of the body are subordinated to values of the soul as their end.

Turning now to the soul, its substance, powers, and faculties, we find that many argue that pleasure — either the pleasures of sense or the more refined pleasures of the mind — is the Supreme Good which all desire and from the possession of which they derive supreme happiness. To this contention we answer by admitting first of all that undoubtedly both the activity which results in pleasure and pleasure itself are real values and goods and, therefore, real goals or ends. However, as to the pleasures of sense, they are shared by brutes and men alike and can, therefore, not be termed specifically human values and ends. But even the more refined pleasures of mind, which are specifically human, do not by themselves constitute supreme happiness or the master value, but are merely the by-products of these. Such pleasures are the subjective and conscious reflections of the objective good, and their value is therefore derived from the possession of the objective good. Pleasure in the commonly accepted sense of the term is therefore not a primary but a secondary value, depending itself on the objective value of the goals or ends of human desire as on its raison d'être.

It is the error of *hedonism,* or the philosophical doctrine which sees in pleasure the Supreme Good and ultimate end of human desire, that it confounds the order of values and of ends by depriving human activity of its real and ultimate object. The enjoyment and satisfaction of the hedonist is entirely self-centered and more or less sterile in that he merely enjoys his own enjoyment and is satisfied with his satisfaction, instead of deriving his joys and satisfactions from the attainment of certain objective goals and from the realization of specifically human values.

If the hedonist is wrong in defining pleasure as the highest

good and ultimate end, the philosopher who either denies that pleasure is a real good, or postulates a "disinterested pleasure" (Kant) as the only morally valid kind of delectation, is equally wrong. St. Thomas Aquinas characterizes such an attitude as "insensibility" or apathy, holding that it is morally unjustifiable: "Everything which runs counter to the natural order is a vice. Now nature has joined pleasure with those activities which are necessary for human life, and, therefore, the natural order demands that man use this pleasure to the extent which is necessary for the attainment of the human good, whether it be the good of the individual or the good of the species."[9] The scholastic philosopher goes so far as to maintain that the value of human activities may be judged according to the pleasure which is sought by their pursuit. Thus he who seeks the coarsest pleasures is least good, while he who seeks the highest pleasures is also the best human being. The high quality of his pleasure will be indicative of the superior quality of the good to whose possession he has attained, and the highest and most sublime pleasure will be concomitant with the possession of the Supreme Good. The supreme pleasure participates in the supreme goodness, and its attainment thus marks the terminus of the soul's desire, imparting to it the tranquillity of happiness unalloyed.

We can see now that pleasure as it is ordinarily understood does not constitute the final end, but that it may well be a kind of bridge leading to that end. However, there are other human values, such as knowledge and wisdom, or personal, social, and racial culture, or an ever more perfect human adjustment to environmental conditions, or the technological perfection of man's rule over the universe, which are frequently regarded as supreme values and infallible safeguards of human happiness. As to knowledge and wisdom, they are acts of the human soul and as such realizations of the soul's potentialities, and they in turn aim at objectives and objects which lie beyond themselves. And as these acts aim beyond themselves, they cannot themselves be the final end of man. Culture, social adjustment, or technological development, on the other hand, are conditions and means of human progress and as such they are at best intermediary, not final ends.

[9] *Summa Theologica,* II–II, q. 150, a. 1, ad. 1., and II–II, q. 142, a. 2.

Is it then as impossible to discover the "end of ends" within human nature as we found it impossible to discover it outside human nature? And yet, we know that the human soul has a capacity for infinite truth as well as for infinite good; we know that in its knowledge and in its love (will, desire) it can "become all things" and embrace all things (cf. p. 93). We are aware of the fact that it is this power of knowing and loving all things which makes finite man in a way akin to Divine infinity, revealing him as a being made "in the image and likeness of God."

We are therefore confronted with the following dilemma: On the one hand, the final end of man must be somehow grounded in his own nature and, on the other, this final end is neither constituted by his body nor by his soul. How are we to resolve this apparent paradox without sacrificing either the relative intellectual autonomy of the human soul or the absolute autonomy of the Divine Reason? The answer is that the "end of ends" is both immanent and transcendent: the Supreme Good has implanted in the human soul and its faculties both the power of knowing universal truth and the "rational appetite" for universal good. These powers, enshrined in the depth of the soul by its Maker, are waiting for their actualization in the moral action of man, the rational animal. Morality for the human soul, therefore, is not a foreign law imposed from without: it is rather the soul's own intrinsic law, the law, the order, and the voice of reason, recognized by the human intellect as the law and the voice of God.

We see now that human nature for its perfection needs and desires the transcendent and the Divine because only in Divine transcendence can the human soul find and be united to the desired ultimate objects of intellect and will, viz., the totality of truth and the totality of goodness. And as God alone is this totality of truth and goodness, God alone can be the Supreme Value and the "end of ends," in which man's desire comes to rest and from whose attainment human nature derives lasting happiness.

It only remains for us to complete our inquiry into the nature of the "end of ends" by asking in what man's supreme happiness or his enjoyment of the Supreme Value actually consists. What kind of reality is it that actualizes every possi-

bility of human nature so that nothing more remains to be desired?

According to Aristotle, the supreme happiness or beatitude of man consists in the contemplation of the Divine.[10] However, in comparing this sublime ideal with the realities of human life, we find that such a contemplation of the Divine is greatly limited for the generality of men by the occupations and necessities of daily life. The pressures and instabilities of our natural and social environment constantly interfere with any undisturbed pursuit of our supreme happiness.

Aristotle was not entirely unaware of this difficulty, but he apparently knew of no way to resolve it. St. Thomas Aquinas agreed with the Greek philosopher as to the way in which man's "rational appetite" and its infinite goal, the Supreme Good, were defined and evaluated. He realized, however, the impossibility of determining the nature of man's supreme happiness or beatitude without having recourse to the source of Christian revelation, a source which had not been available to Aristotle. Thus it was partly in his capacity as a Christian theologian rather than as a philosopher that St. Thomas supplemented and completed Aristotle's argument. "We see distinctly," he wrote, "what has vexed these great thinkers in their diverse speculations. We are more fortunate because we are . . . in a position to state that human beings can attain to perfect happiness *after this life,* owing to the fact that their souls are immortal."[11] Beginning with the factual observation that the present transitory state of human life does not permit the fullest realization of the moral order, he looks beyond the boundaries of human experience for the complete and final actualization of the potentialities of human nature.

This inclusion of *man's supernatural end* in his discussion of the object of human desire causes St. Thomas to distinguish between the "natural beatitude," as described by Aristotle, and the "supernatural beatitude" or the "beatific vision" (*visio beata*), as taught by Christian theology. However, the Christian philosopher discovers in the very nature of the human intellect as supernaturalized by grace the connecting link between man's final natural and man's final supernatural

[10] *Nic. Eth.*, VII, 1177ª, 12–18 and VIII, 1178ª, 9–14.
[11] *Summa Contra Gentiles,* III, 48.

destination, thereby reaffirming the famous scholastic saying that divine grace does not destroy nature but rather leads it to its perfection and transfiguration (*gratia supponit et perficit naturam*). Once we fully understand that the reality of God is logically included in the reality of nature and in the reality of man, and vice versa, and that all relativity ultimately finds its desired complement in the Absolute, there is no longer an unbridgeable abyss between man's moral aspiration and its final end. Not only the "Kingdom of God" but God Himself is "in us" as well as "above us," and in unison with His will our own will is capable of perfecting the order of nature in the order of grace until we attain, as we hope, to the "Light of Glory."

Thus we are now in a position to contemplate and evaluate human life in accordance with its true proportions. We ascribe to it genuine value and substantial reality, but in doing so we remain ever conscious of the fact that both its value and reality are only "borrowed": they are derived from the Supreme Value and Reality, and the ultimate meaning and significance of life lies not in itself but rather in that Infinite Life Principle which all created life represents and reflects and to which it consciously or unconsciously aspires. The things and beings of time are impregnated with the weight and dynamic force of the Eternal, and it is for this reason that the most ardent and determined seekers of the Eternal are also the most prudent and loyal servants of the temporal.

Finally, reverting to Aristotle's high esteem of the life of pure speculation and contemplation, we find that for St. Thomas Aquinas, too, as for most other thinkers of ancient and medieval times, and in accordance also with Scriptural doctrine,[12] the contemplative ranks above the active life. To understand the reasons underlying this emphasis placed on the contemplative life by Christian theology and philosophy, we call to mind the dual function — theoretical and practical — attributed by Aristotle to the human intellect. When the intellect is engaged in the acquisition of knowledge, it exercises its capacity for pure speculation. When, on the other

[12] Luke, 10:41–42, "But the Lord answered and said to her: 'Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things; and yet only one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the best part, and it will not be taken away from her.' "

hand, the intellect concerns itself with the principles and rules of human conduct and works toward the realization of the human good, it exercises its capacity for "practical wisdom," the latter being defined by Aristotle as "a state conjoined with reason . . . having human good for its object, and capable of doing."[13] Now human activity approximates the Divine activity and consequently increases in value and significance in proportion as it becomes more unified and continuous. For unity and continuity rank above diversity and multiplicity. The *active life,* however, concerning itself with a multiplicity of things, is inferior, in value and as a source of happiness, to *the life of contemplation,* which is concerned with one thing only, viz., that Divine Truth which imparts meaning to all other things.

Nevertheless, Christian philosophy does not share the Greek philosopher's disdain of the active, practical life. For St. Thomas Aquinas the active life is a means leading to the end of contemplation and making a person disposed for the contemplative life. The *active life,* like the life of Martha, is good, but the *contemplative life,* the life of Mary, is better. It is better because it is actuated by the highest principle in man, the intellectual soul, and because it is directly related to and preoccupied with the highest value, the "end of ends." It may, however, according to St. Thomas, become necessary to give preference to the active life, owing to material needs and contingencies: "For though it is true," he writes, quoting Aristotle, "that to philosophize is better than to gather riches, it is nevertheless better to possess riches than to suffer privation."[14] Thus St. Thomas Aquinas "does not conceive active and contemplative life as contrasts, but he regards them as two intimately related and correlative forms of the Christian life."[15]

We conclude then with St. Thomas that the "beatific vision" or perfect beatitude which must result from man's being face to face with the ultimate object of his "rational appetite" is impossible of attainment in this life. "In our present life, however, nothing comes closer to this complete and final

[13] *Nic. Eth.,* VI, 1140[b].

[14] *Summa Theologica,* II–II, q. 182, a. 1; Aristotle, *Topic.,* lib. III, cap. 2, explic. loci 40.

[15] Cf. the author's "Fundamental Notions of Mysticism" in *The New Scholasticism,* Vol. V, 2, p. 120 sq.

happiness than the way of those who contemplate truth as well as can be done here and now. . . . The contemplation of truth begins in the present life, but it is completed in the future life, whereas the active and social life does not endure beyond the present."[16]

[16] *Summa Contra Gentiles*, III, 63.

§ 17. Human Freedom

HAVING determined what constitutes the Supreme Good and after having demonstrated that from its possession only can a rational creature derive lasting happiness, we now extend our inquiry to an investigation of those acts which lead to the possession of the Supreme Good and to the happiness this entails.

Once more let us recall to mind the distinction made between beings which act with knowledge and beings which act without knowledge (cf. p. 87). Of the latter we found that in their activities they *are* moved toward their ends, while the former act and move knowingly with a view to some end. And again, with the latter the principle of their activities is an external one, while the former bear the principle of their actions within their own natures. An action, however, which flows from an immanent principle we call *voluntary,* while an activity which receives its directives from an external principle is said to be imposed from without and therefore *involuntary*. And the more immanent or intrinsic the principle of action is, the clearer will have to be the knowledge of the end and the more purely voluntary will be the character of the act. But among those beings which are known to us by experience, it is man who most distinctly initiates his own acts and clearly performs them with an awareness of a purpose or end. The acts of man, the rational animal, thus differ from the activities of subrational beings who possess spontaneous volition in the sense that they do not disagree with their inner nature that prompts them. An act, moreover, which has its principle in the nature of a being and which moves toward a rationally determined end, we call *free*. Human acts, there-

fore, proceeding from an intrinsic source and tending toward a rationally known and determined end, *are free.*

It is obvious, as was pointed out above (cf. p. 111), that not every "act of man" is a "human" or a "free" act in the sense just indicated. To make it strictly human, an act must be freely willed and must thus express and execute a deliberate judgment of the human intellect. Such a free or deliberate intellectual judgment, however, can only be exercised by a being which is capable of knowing the nature of the True as well as the nature of the Good. The object of the "rational appetite" or "the will" has the same universal or transcendental amplitude as the object of intellectual knowledge: while the ultimate object of the latter is all the truth that there is, the ultimate object of the former is all the good that there is. Both intellect and will are related to the transcendental realm of being, the former to its transcendental attribute of truth, the latter to its transcendental attribute of goodness (cf. p. 35). We are thus again forcefully reminded of the close interrelation and interdependence of metaphysics and ethics.

From the foregoing we conclude that human freedom has its roots in human reason or human judgment, and that without rationality there would be no freedom. Conversely, the denial of human freedom implies the denial of rationality. Any consistently deterministic "ethics" is actually a contradiction in terms because a moral philosophy or ethics is only possible on the basis of human freedom. The entire moral life of man, including the moral qualifications of every specifically human act, rests on the reality of *free will* or *free choice.*

It might be objected that brutes, having sense knowledge and sense appetite, possess a kind of primitive or rudimentary reason and, therefore, a corresponding rudimentary form of freedom. We answer that brutes indeed have a sensory perception of particular goods, in addition to being equipped with sensitive instincts, by virtue of which they are informed as to the suitability or unsuitability of the particular objects of their knowledge and desire, but we claim that this kind of awareness, the judgments involved in it, and the choices resulting from it cannot be regarded as qualitatively equivalent to the judgments of human reason and the resulting human freedom of choice. The "animal's judgment," to which St.

Thomas refers and which enables brutes to evaluate situations as to their suitability and to arrive at decisions which benefit both the individual and the species, is very limited in its scope when we compare it with the operations and evaluations engaged in by the human intellect. When we observe the skillful but uniform methods used by spiders in spinning their webs, by bees in preparing their honeycombs and hives, by birds in building their nests or feeding their young, it seems that in these activities the nature of the species rather than the judgment of the individual is at work. The principles or causes of these animal activities and of the judgments from which they result frequently seem quite as extrinsic to the individual animal as the causes of the mechanical, physical, or chemical movements in inorganic nature are extrinsic to an individual inorganic being or element: "For just as the heavy body does not move in such a way that it could be called the cause of its motion, so the animal does not judge in such a way that it could be called the cause of its own judgment.

"The real cause of the animal's judgment is rather the animal nature as such and, through the medium of this nature, God Himself. The animal, therefore, is not the free master of its decisions: it does not possess freedom of will. . . . We are masters only by virtue of the fact that we can exercise our faculty of judgment. Only reason, however, can judge even its own judgment by reflecting on its own intellectual activity and by recognizing the relations which exist between that which is judged and that by means of which reason exercises its judgment. From this it follows that freedom is entirely grounded in reason and that a being's relationship to reason determines this being's relationship to freedom."[17]

We have stated that an act, to be called truly human, must be a free act, and that every such free act is grounded in reason. Each "human act," accordingly, is an act of free will. Acts of free will, however, are by definition impossible if the will suffers constraint or violence. And by "free acts" we mean here acts which are commanded and initiated by the will. While the execution of such acts may be impeded by external

[17] St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Veritate* 24, 1; 2.

force, the specific determination or intention of the will itself remains nevertheless inviolate. Thus, an action commanded by the will may fall short of its realization because of the natural weakness or defective condition of some physical organs on whose aid the execution of the will's command depends. For example, a man suffering violence at the hands of the State or at the hands of his fellow men may be frustrated in the carrying out of his moral resolutions, but it is clear that the integrity of his moral resolve or the act of the will as such is in no way impaired by such external impediments and circumstances.

There is only one imaginable case in which the human will would lose its power of choice and would have to reach out for its object with a kind of moral necessity, comparable to the physical necessity with which the falling stone follows the law of gravity. We know that the ultimate object of the will is the *good as such,* just as the ultimate object of the intellect or of knowledge is the *true as such.* Now the will is free to choose among the many relative goods with which it is confronted. If, however, the will were to find itself face to face with the Absolute Good or the good as such, it would meet, so to speak, with the sum total of the objects of its desire and would therefore embrace of necessity this ultimate end and object of the "rational appetite." In other words, if an immediate or direct and unobstructed vision of God were possible in this life, the will would no longer "will" or strive but would rest in the attainment and fruition of perfect beatitude.

Having a capacity and an innate striving for infinite good or the good as such, but moving in the sphere of finite and relative goods, the rational appetite or will is free with regard to every finite, partial, or relative good. It can choose among the multitude of those particular goods which are within the realm and reach of human knowledge and experience, basing its preferential choice (or the refusal to make such a choice) on a reasoned judgment or deliberation. An act of free will or free choice is thus impossible without knowledge and rational deliberation. Ethics or moral philosophy, we conclude, is not only the science of human acts but, more profoundly, the science of the ultimate ends of human acts: it informs us

as to the proper use of human freedom, as to the adequate means to be adopted to attain ends proposed and presented by reason.

When we come to consider the nature of that *deliberation* which precedes free human acts, we have to direct our attention not only to the structure of these acts but also and primarily to the human being whose freedom is manifested in them. Man's rational appetite or will is also a "natural appetite" in that it has its basis in human nature in the same way in which the sense appetite of subrational creatures has its basis in the nature of these beings. We therefore cannot accept the thesis advanced by Kant in his *Critique of Practical Reason,* by which he postulates an intrinsic and irreconcilable opposition or antagonism between *nature,* on the one hand, and *freedom,* on the other. According to Kant, the complete self-determination or "autonomy" of the rational will is the supreme law and the condition of morality. Freedom, however, and therewith morality are excluded from the world of *phenomena* or appearances as constituted by the data of intramental experience, mediated by the innate or a priori forms of the mind. This world of phenomena is subject to the strictly determined causality of "nature." A "free act," on the other hand, cannot be determined by other acts but only by itself. Moral freedom or autonomy, Kant therefore concludes, is radically opposed to the determinism of "nature."

In the *Critique of Pure Reason* this philosopher had demonstrated that "theoretical reason" cannot make any valid statements concerning the nature of "things-in-themselves" (*noumena*). Morality and moral freedom, therefore, cannot be established or substantiated by "theoretical reason." Without moral freedom, however, morality and with it a meaningful and purposive human life would be an impossibility. Moral freedom, therefore, must be "postulated" and its reality affirmed by "practical reason" which bases its certitude on inner experience. For Kant the reality of "the moral law within" is as indubitable as the reality of "the starry sky above."[18]

If we inquire into the philosophical meaning of this Kantian

[18] It should be noted, however, that, according to Kant's own tenets, as advanced in the *Critique of Pure Reason,* the "reality" of the "starry sky" itself can only be a "phenomenal," not a "noumenal" reality!

argument in favor of human freedom, we find that freedom is regarded by him not as an object of knowledge but as an article and object of faith: an "a priori" or innate faith, preceding all experience. In trying to make "practical reason" autonomous or entirely independent of "theoretical reason," Kant proclaims a primacy of ethics over metaphysics, of action over thought, which exactly reverses the position of pre-Kantian philosophy. While in the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition, down the centuries to Kant's own teacher, Christian Wolff (1679–1754), it had been the function of "theoretical reason" (metaphysics) to establish the bases of "practical reason" (ethics) and to inquire into the metaphysical nature and foundations of human freedom, Kant finds in the empirical fact of moral conscience a practical evidence of the moral law which stands in no need of any metaphysical justification.

Man, then, according to Kant, is a member of two worlds or orders: the natural, physical, material order in which everything is strictly determined and in which man therefore functions as a necessary product of the causal texture of "phenomena"; and the suprasensible, spiritual, and moral order in which man acts as a free or autonomous being. These two orders the philosopher conceives as being not only unrelated but strictly opposed to each other. In the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition, on the other hand, the order of mind and spirit as well as the order of morality or freedom are *rooted in the order of nature,* both orders having their common ground and term in the *order of being.* This order of being, as we have repeatedly pointed out, is a graduated or hierarchical order, having as its base the realm of sensible objects or the material universe, but rising from the material, vegetative, and sentient to the rational and spiritual levels of being. Morality and freedom, as we have seen, have their beginning on the level of rational being. But while freedom has its empirical beginnings in rational animals, its original sources are found on a still higher level of being, viz., in the realm of supernatural or Divine Being. Man, by virtue of his knowledge and his will (rational appetite), reflects this Supreme Reality which is the first cause of his nature and therefore also the first cause of his freedom, the latter being a constituent of the rational part of his nature. God, therefore, who is the

author of nature, including the material or physical nature of man, is also the author of man's rational and moral nature: He is the author of human freedom.

Once more, however, a difficulty arises which, in another context (cf. pp. 68 sq.), we have met before: how can God's all-pervasive causality be reconciled with the free activities of secondary causes? If God is the prime author of all beings and their movements, is He not also the exclusive author? But if thus God is the prime author of all acts, is He not also the exclusive author of all so-called "free" or human acts? And are we not then committed to a "spiritual determinism" as rigid as the mechanistic determinism of the positivists and materialists? This question was in fact answered affirmatively by those who attributed freedom only to a World Soul (Averroës, Schelling, etc.) or a World Spirit (Hegel), but not to individual souls and wills. From the fact that relative being presupposes Absolute Being, the pantheists (Spinoza) concluded that all relative beings are only modes or attributes of "the Absolute," and from the fact that all relative activities presuppose the activity of the absolute First Cause, the fatalists concluded that there is neither freedom nor chance, but only necessity (Spengler).

The solution of this problem can only be found in a philosophy which safeguards the precincts of both the Absolute and the relative, clarifying their nature and interrelation and thus saving the relative from being extinguished or absorbed by the Absolute and vice versa. Such a solution is suggested in Thomistic philosophy, chiefly by means of its profound analysis of the nature of divine transcendence. Thomism insists, first of all, that the entire realm of being depends on God as on its First Cause; it emphasizes, secondly, that everything is constituted in its specific nature by virtue of this very dependence, so that a being, far from losing its nature or essence by reason of this dependency, is rather fully itself only in virtue of it. In other words, man could neither *be* nor *be free* without God. As in everything else that he is or has, so also in his possession of freedom he entirely depends on *Him who is*. The fact that man in his being and existence depends on God's being and existence, far from preventing him from being fully man, rather firmly establishes him in his human

nature and therewith in his freedom. Man depends on God in his being (*in ratione entis*), but he is independent or free in so far as he is involved in the contingency of those causal relations and activities which are implicit in his human nature. We may say, therefore, that he is ontologically or metaphysically dependent, but psychologically and morally he is free. The activity of God is not a special condition of man's freely willed acts but rather the universal precondition or presupposition of all being and therefore also of man's being: "We must not conceive of this matter as if one and the same effect were to be attributed to a natural cause and to divine power in such a way as to regard it as partly produced by God and partly by a natural cause. The effect is rather fully caused by both, albeit in a different manner: it is caused by God as that First Being which is the source of all being; and by the created being, acting as a secondary cause."[19] It is necessary to emphasize that without God's perpetual and all-permeating "act" there would be neither human beings, nor human activities, nor human freedom.

§ 18. Values and Free Choice

TO SAY that man is free is to maintain that he can choose among values or goods. This statement in turn implies that man does not and in fact cannot choose an antivalue (disvalue) or desire the negative *as such or qua antivalue.* For, as the only and exclusive object of the will is the good, man can only desire and make his choice among goods or values. The willing of *evil qua evil* would amount to a self-annihilation of the will, since the will as such, according to its very being and essence, is the desire of the good. It is therefore not only correct to say with Aristotle that "good is what all desire" but also that what all actually desire and possibly can desire is the good.

If we then further inquire into the nature of that which constitutes goodness or value in the concrete, we are reminded that in our metaphysical analysis we recognized the good as one of the transcendental attributes or aspects of being

[19] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles,* III, 70.

(cf. pp. 37 sq.). Being, considered as the object of knowledge, is called "true"; being, considered as the object of desire, is called "good." A thing then is good or valuable in so far as it is or has being; it is evil in so far as it lacks being or falls short of its due perfection.

If we now apply this same criterion to the sphere of human acts (which are also forms of being), we may say with St. Thomas Aquinas that "every action, so far as it possesses being, to that extent it contains goodness, but in so far as it lacks something of that fullness of being which is due a human action, in the same measure it lacks goodness and is thus termed evil."[20]

A human action, properly speaking, must therefore be an action for a value or end which befits man according to the kind of being that he is and according to the amount of being that he has, i.e., according to his nature. And as this nature is the nature of a rational animal, any action of man which does not conform to the demands of reason is lacking in a due moral perfection and is therefore termed nonhuman, immoral, or evil. And as it is the task of the "theoretical reason" to reach out for truth by means of the principles of knowledge, so it is the task of the "practical reason" to reach out for goodness, by discovering the universal and necessary principles of human action.

We are taking the risk of oversimplifying a highly complex problem when we attempt to circumscribe this task of moral philosophy by stating that the principles of human action are implied in the correct definition of man and that all that is morally required of man is the fullest realization of his own nature or his own self.[21] And yet, this statement expresses the vital continuity which exists between metaphysics and ethics and contains as in an abbreviated formula the essential structure of moral philosophy in all its ramifications.

We are now prepared to turn our attention to a closer scrutiny of the *act of choice* or *free will* itself and of that *deliberation* which precedes every such preferential choice. A circumspect analysis discloses the action of the will as par-

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[20] *Summa Theologica*, I-II, q. 18, a. 1.

[21] "Become what thou art" (*Werde was du bist*), as Goethe, following the lead of Plotinus, poignantly expressed this Aristotelian idea.

tially dependent on and conditioned by reason, and it will be our task to describe the essentially *mixed character* of a willed act by first considering its component parts and then delineating their respective share in the composite act.

Aristotle adequately characterized the mixed character of the act of free choice when he termed it an "inteligent desire."[22] And, similarly, for St. Gregory of Nyssa (†*circa* 394), one of the early Church Fathers, choice is not desire taken by itself, nor deliberation taken by itself, but a composite of the two. How, then, are these operations, desire and deliberation, related to each other, and how does their cooperative interplay and junction produce the consummate act of choice?

We know that the will or rational appetite has a natural tendency toward the good as its object. It desires the good of necessity and it would, as we have pointed out (cf. p. 126), embrace of necessity the Absolute Good if ever it were confronted with it. Actually, however, in this life the human will is never confronted with the Absolute Good, but only with relative and particular goods and values. The will, then, seeking the good as such, but finding goodness only in the form of particularized goods, desires these relative goods and values. But while the will is not free with regard to the Absolute Good, it is capable of evaluating relative goods, viewing them critically and determining their limitations and shortcomings. The reason for this St. Thomas Aquinas admirably analyzes: "If we consider," he writes, "any particular good, the intellect can view it under the aspect of its goodness or of its lack of goodness which makes it defective and which causes us to call it evil; and in this way the intellect can understand any such good as either worthy or unworthy of choice (*eligibile vel fugibile*). The intellect cannot, however, apprehend the Perfect Good under the aspect of evil or of any defectiveness, and therefore man wills of necessity his supreme happiness (beatitude), and he cannot will to be unhappy or miserable."[23] In other words, man is without freedom of choice with regard to the ultimate end or the perfect and absolute value, but he possesses freedom of choice with regard to intermediate ends

[22] *Nic. Eth.*, VI, 2.
[23] *Summa Theologica*, I-II, q. 13, a. 6.

as well as with regard to those means which are presented to him in the form of particular goods or values. The absolute norm of "the good," however, can be approached or interpreted by reason in various ways, prudently or imprudently, in accordance with the more or less changeable and fallible human judgment, and the formation of the judgment itself is man's responsibility, depending, as it were, on his more or less adequate realization of the nature of "the good" and "the end" and on his more or less developed intellectual faculty of comparative evaluation. Thus, reason may "substitute" pseudo values for real values, pseudo absolutes for the real Absolute, and it may present to the will these surrogates as acceptable and desirable goods. And as all individual human acts are concerned with individual objects, the will, relying for its choice on the deliberation and judgment of the intellect, remains indetermined or free with regard to individual objects. "The root of freedom," to quote again St. Thomas Aquinas, "is the will as its bearer and executor; but the cause of free choice is the intellect. For the will can direct itself to different objects only because the intellect can form different ideas of what is good."[24]

Our next question concerns then necessarily the constitutive elements of those intellectual judgments on which the will has to rely for its decisions or choices. We know that the intellect is capable of recognizing an absolute norm of the Good, and we also know that with the aid of this universal concept the intellect can form its judgment regarding the relative value of particular goods. We must ask then what factors contribute to the formation of such intellectual judgments. And we must ask furthermore to what extent these contributing factors determine the ultimate preference or choice and to what extent they leave it undetermined or free. If man were to form his intellectual judgment by the weight of an irresistibly compelling influence, no room evidently would be left for any free judgment nor for any subsequent free act of the will, the latter being, so to speak, intellectually indifferent or blind, relying for its information on the judgment of the intellect.

Human acts, we repeat, share in the general character of

[24] *Summa Theologica*, I-II, q. 17, a. 1, ad. 2[m].

all natural activities in that they all tend toward an end or a good. And as every natural activity follows the form of the being which exercises it (*operari sequitur esse*), the activity of a rational nature follows the form imparted to the human act or the act of the will by human reason. Thus, in the close cooperation which exists between human deliberation and human will, it is reason which lends the vision, but it is will which sets the act. But since the end which is visualized by the intellect is presented to the will for its acceptance, this end must be present in both faculties, and it is on this account that we are entitled to call the will "reasonable" and refer to it as a "rational appetite." Both intellect and will are faculties of the human soul, and as faculties they are mutually dependent on each other, and in their activities they are related to the originator of the action or the agent, on the one hand, and to the term of the action or the end, on the other. Man, the agent, uses his intellect to move himself to willed action, and he uses his will to move himself to deliberation, intellectual understanding, and moral judgment. If we follow this repeated interplay or mutual conditioning of intellectual deliberation and freely willed decision to its ultimate roots, we come back to the consideration from which we started: we arrive at an initial act of "rational volition" or "intellectual appetite" which as such proceeds from the deepest ground of human nature. The possibility of this first act of "rational volition" or "willed deliberation" by the "rational appetite" is due to the "First Cause" or Prime Mover of human nature and of all its faculties and activities, i.e., to God. By giving to all beings their own nature, God also gives to them the principles of their activities. The principles of specifically human activity, however, are intellect and free will.

While we admit then that God's all-pervasive causality is the ultimate and most interior mover of the human will, we maintain that the will, though called into being by God, retains its inherent created and creative freedom of self-determination or choice within the sphere of relative goods or values. As the will naturally tends toward the totality of good, no partial or relative good can attract it with an irresistible force. The indetermination or free determinability of human acts has as its basis the relativity of particular goods, on the

one hand, and the flexibility and fallibility of human deliberations and judgments, on the other. Under the influence of both these factors man is capable of determining his actions in several different ways.

But we still have to face the question as to the extent of the motive power or compelling strength of those factors which influence both judgment and will. In other words, if we reject the doctrine of integral determinism, are we prepared to accept the contentions of an equally integral indeterminism?

On the basis of our previous reflections we evidently neither claim with the determinists that the will is always forced by extrinsic motives, nor do we maintain with the indeterminists that the will is absolutely independent or "autonomous." The solution of the problem will therefore have to be found in between these two extreme positions.

Jacques Maritain, in stating the Thomistic position in this matter, distinguishes between the "freedom of choice" and the "freedom of autonomy."[25] This distinction will aid us in recognizing the *limitations of human freedom.*

As freedom is the distinguishing character trait of human personality, and as we have found (cf. p. 44) that there are *different degrees of personality,* among which that of the human being is the lowest and least perfect, so there are correspondingly *different degrees of freedom.* Human freedom itself admits of different degrees of realization or growth, i.e., it is essentially dynamic rather than static, being capable of increasing perfection, in direct proportion to the growing perfection of human personality. In becoming ever more obedient to the demands of his rational nature, the human being actualizes to an ever higher degree his possibilities as a person, and he realizes ever more fully the potential scope of his freedom. While man thus, in making the best possible use of his freedom of choice, may approximate the highest degrees of freedom — yet "freedom of autonomy" or complete and absolute self-sufficiency and self-determination can only be ascribed to the supreme form of personality, vis., the Divine Person.

[25] Jacques Maritain, *Freedom in the Modern World,* transl. by Richard O'Sullivan (New York: Scribners, 1936), pp. 29 sq.

In the measure, however, in which man purifies his own self by the realization of the possibilities of his rational nature, to the same extent he also purifies his faculty of volition or his freedom of choice. The more he approximates the "freedom of autonomy," the less will he become capable of using his freedom improperly, the less will he be subject to the distracting and debasing influences of external circumstances as well as of his own internal unruly emotions and passions. He will, on the contrary, acquire increasing self-mastery and "autonomy." A man may be said to be free when he is able to do wrong, but when he has reached the stage where he is able to do always right or to choose always the good (or rather "the best"), he is not less but more free. As Friedrich Schiller, the German classical poet and philosopher, in criticizing and correcting Kant's rigorous and antithetically pointed opposition of "nature" and "freedom," so clearly recognized: man reaches his highest moral perfection when his natural inclination has become so purified and ennobled that he desires only the good ("the best"), i.e., when natural desire and moral obligation are harmonized and reconciled.[26] Then and then only can man truly be said to be free: free from both external and internal constraint and bondage. Therefore, speaking of the more or less perfected faculty of free choice (*liberum arbitrium*), St. Thomas Aquinas writes: "It is due to the imperfection of the will that it can proceed to a conclusion, disregarding the order of moral principles, but it is a sign of perfect freedom when the will reaches a stage where it can choose among different things only in accordance with the way in which they are ordered and related to the end."[27] And the identical thought is expressed by St. Augustine in the well-known saying: "For it is less to be able not to sin, but greater not to be able to sin."[28]

In rejecting both absolute determinism and absolute indeterminism we made reference to the motivations which influence the will from without as well as from within, and it will now be our task to weigh these influences in order to find out to what extent they are capable of binding or deter-

[26] Friedrich Schiller, "On Grace and Dignity" (1793) and "Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man" (1794–1795).
[27] *Summa Theologica,* I, q. 62, a. 8, ad 3.
[28] Op. Imperf. contra Julianum, lib. V, 58.

mining the will and to what extent they leave it undetermined or free. St. Thomas Aquinas, in his discussion of this matter, mentions a considerable number of major and minor motives which may cause the intellect and, subsequently, the will to lean to one side rather than another. A man may be faced, for example, with the alternative of either following a course which is beneficial for his health or another course which satisfies his sensual appetites. In adopting the former course he obeys the demand of his reason and thereby acts in accordance with his own human or rational nature. In other words, whenever man's will moves and acts in accordance with what his reason tells him about human nature and about the ends of human nature, then the will is motivated by what *ought to* move it and not merely by what possibly *could* move it. Such acts are freely willed acts because the will might have obeyed other influences, but freely chose to live up to the requisites of that "rational appetite" which constitutes its very nature.

Secondly, we may conceive of instances in which man finds himself entangled in the motivating forces of various external circumstances. He may be so thoroughly submissive to the attraction of some relative good that his intellectual awareness is dulled and put to sleep, and in this case the relative good not only will appear to him as an absolute value, but it will also produce an effect which is properly associated with the Supreme Good only, i.e., it will *force* the assent of the will. Thus, to cite an example close at hand, the ideas of *nationalism* or *racism* may develop into a kind of obsession, so that the nation or the race assume the appearance of the Absolute Good and in such a guise becloud the judgment of reason and *necessitate* the act of the will.

Thirdly, the motivations which influence the decision of the will may be *internal* rather than external, i.e., they may have their ground in the character and disposition of the human agent himself. According to Aristotle: "As a man is, so appears to him the end."[29] The will of a calm and composed man differs, in its reaction to the identical objects, from the will of a man in a state of high-pitched emotion and passion. If such a particular human disposition is partially or totally conditioned by physical or physiological causes, then this man is

[29] *Nic. Eth.*, III, 5.

no longer truly a free or responsible agent, and his will is no longer the faculty of free choice as which we have learned to know it. If, on the other hand, the human disposition is accessible to the influence of deliberation and will, then the human being is a free agent, capable of changing this or that particular disposition. "Thus," writes Aristotle, "if a man is so disposed that, owing to a habit or passion, this particular object appears to him either as a good or as an evil, then the will is not motivated by necessity: for it can overcome this habit, so that the same object no longer appears to it in this particular way, as, for example, a man can calm his anger, so that he no longer passes judgment in an angry mood."[30]

Among the other factors which affect the practical judgments and decisions of man, St. Thomas Aquinas stresses especially those of heredity and education, to which, in conformity with ancient and medieval beliefs, he adds the influence of the heavenly bodies.[31] In an individual inclining, through force of hereditary and/or environmental influences, to anger, lust, or mendacity, certain objects and acts corresponding to such habits or passions may assume the appearance of goods. His practical judgment may regard as good what in these matters satisfies his habits and passions. However, in judging as good anything that is good only in relation to the irrational part of his nature, and in being carried on to act in accordance with this judgment, such an individual will no longer act freely or in a human way. What motivates his actions will resemble the rigid causal determinism which is at work in subrational nature, a causal determinism which depends entirely on the aggregate factors of physical generation, inherited characteristics, and general cosmic relations and conditions.

What we are describing here is, to be sure, an extreme case, conceivable only if we presuppose that man's reason and will have become thoroughly fettered, enslaved, or obscured by influences beyond the control of these human faculties. And once this has happened, it will no longer be possible for human reason and human will to find in the human body such dispositions as are necessary for the proper functioning of these faculties. Man will then have lost the capacity of comparing

[30] Aristotle, *loc. cit.*
[31] Cf. *De Veritate*, 24, 1; ad 19[m].

the Absolute Norm or end of his acts with the relative value of the particular physical good, i.e., his action will no longer be free, but strictly determined.

On the other hand, as long as reason has a chance to deliberate, and in the measure in which it can exercise its function, to that extent man will be able to estimate the relative value of particular goods in view of the Absolute Norm. And though human passion may strongly lean toward those goods which satisfy man's sense appetites, the ensuing acts will no longer be necessitated, but will possess the character trait of varying degrees of freedom.

As far as *habits* are concerned, they do not inhere in physical organs or sense appetites but in the will itself. As is known from common-sense observation and confirmed by psychological research, moral as well as immoral habits are acquired by repeated acts of the will, resulting in the will's habitual inclination in one direction or another. Thus, a will repeatedly obeying the demand of reason habitually learns to enjoy the companionship of reason and, conversely, a will repeatedly following the impulses of emotion and passion habitually acquires the corresponding inclinations.

As in the intellectual faculty of the soul, by means of speculation, are inscribed the concepts of intellectual knowledge, so the volitional faculty of the soul, by means of moral action, is actualized by *moral habits*. Man is what he is by virtue of his intellectual knowledge and by virtue of his moral action. And again the saying holds true that "as a man is, so appears to him the end": An enlightened intellect and a prudently guided "rational appetite" are centered and anchored in Absolute Truth and Absolute Goodness, while a defective judgment and a corrupted will have lost sight of the hierarchical order of being and value. "That something appears to us as good and appropriate," writes St. Thomas Aquinas, "depends on two conditions: on the condition of the proposed object, on the one hand, and on the condition of the subject to whom the object is proposed, on the other. For appropriateness implies a relationship between two terms. And that is why beings of different disposition may conceive of the identical object as either appropriate or inappropriate."[32]

[32] *Summa Theologica*, I-II, q. 9, a. 2.

For man, the rational animal, there is only one way to be good, viz., to follow the demands of reason. There are, however, several ways in which man's innate desire of the good can manifest its defectiveness: the road of ignorance, the road of weakness, the roads of malice and iniquity. According to Aristotle, "man may go wrong in many different ways but right only in one; and so the former is easy, the latter difficult; easy it is to miss the mark, but hard to hit it. . . . What we mean by *virtue,* then, is the true excellence of man, i.e., a state whereby man himself becomes good, and whereby goodness is imparted to his works and deeds."[33]

The Aristotelian-Thomistic doctrine regarding the nature of human freedom affirms both the grandeur and frailty of man: it honors and extols the one without denying the other. By using freedom, his most precious and precarious gift, man may grow to his full and majestic stature and thus become a master, or he may extinguish the spark of the Divine in his nature and descend into the telluric realm of self-chosen servitude.

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[33] *Nic. Eth.,* II, 6, $1106^{a, b}$.

Chapter Three

HUMAN ACTION IN STATE AND SOCIETY

(Political Philosophy)

§ 19. Man and Society

WE HAVE found man metaphysically constituted as a being endowed with intellect and free will, i.e., with a capacity for reaching out after infinite truth and infinite good. We have designated such a being as a "person" and have pointed out why a greater richness of being and therefore a higher dignity is associated with "personality" than with "individuality" (cf. p. 44). We have seen furthermore that a human "person," in virtue of his life principle — the spiritual soul — with its inherent faculties — intellect and will; knowledge and love — is potentially capable of embracing or "becoming" in some way all things (*quodammodo omnia*) and that human personality finds its fullest realization in man's metaphysical and moral relationship to the absolute reality of God. A human person is thus in a way a small universe (a "microcosm") within the large universe (the "macrocosm"). Man is truly a "whole" or a totality though, owing to the physico-spiritual amplitude and plenitude of his personal essence and faculties, he is not self-sufficient but stands in vital relationship with other types and grades of being. He is neither destined nor fitted to live in isolation but, on the contrary, called and equipped to communicate intellectually, socially, and practico-politically with other beings of his own kind and thus to realize the possibilities of his own self in a constant give-and-take of thought and action. This is why Aristotle, having defined man as a rational animal, adds that he is also a *political* or *social animal.*

Man's nature includes both rational and sociopolitical ele-

ments because it includes both personality and individuality. As an individual, man represents an animal species and as such forms part of the material universe. As a person, man is a body-soul composite and as such the incarnation of spiritual and moral values, by virtue of which he may acquire mastery over the material universe and mastery over his own self.

However, when we say that in human nature the material and spiritual and therefore also the individual and personal elements are both included, we must duly re-emphasize that these components are interlinked and mutually dependent in such a way that their normal activities are inconceivable without their unison. For while in nature and in the life of subrational creatures the ends of the individual and the ends of the species are achieved with the aid of the principle of finality inherent in the universe (cf. p. 67), the ends of individual and social life on the human level cannot be attained without the guidance of human reason, which supplies motives and directives for the life of the individual and of the group and thus implements the individual and social incentives of the species with the weight of personal freedom and responsibility. Nature provides means for the self-preservation and protection of individual and species much more generously in the realm of subrational creatures than it does in the realm of human beings, so that as a consequence the creative activities of human life — individually and socially considered — depend to a much larger extent on the individual and collective ingenuity, inventiveness, and fruitful collaboration of human beings. In living and learning, in agriculture and industry, in the practical achievements of the arts and crafts, in all the works of culture and civilization — man stands in need of man, so that everything he does or creates has both a personal and a social aspect and significance.

This mutual intellectual, moral, and physical interdependence of the members of the human race finds its most conspicuous and most noble manifestation in *human speech,* in which reason becomes, as it were, incarnate, creating for itself the specifically human means of personal expression and social communication.

We find man, then, as previously described (cf. p. 91),

situated at a point of the universe where spirit and matter intersect. In his rational-personal and in his social existence he partakes of the two realms of material and spiritual reality, and it is from this unique and peculiar situation that the major problems and conflicts of his moral and social life arise.

As a part of the material universe and a member of the animal kingdom man is born into and lives in the ethnological and sociological conditions and surroundings of a community of tribal or ethnic kinship and is subject to the conditions and laws which prevail in the kingdoms of subrational nature. In conception and birth, in growth and decay, in the biological patterns of life and death, the human individual serves and perpetuates the *species humana.* But as part of the moral and spiritual universe, i.e., as a human personality, man surpasses the collective community of tribal kinship and its materially conditioned and determined biological laws. As a rational and free being he realizes his spiritual kinship with the incorruptible reality of absolute values, and by making the best possible use of the faculties of his spiritual soul he moves progressively toward greater freedom or greater "autonomy," attracted and motivated by his more or less dimmed visualization of absolute truth, absolute goodness, and absolute beauty.

Because man is thus a native of two essentially distinct realms of being — matter and spirit — he is prone to misjudge his own nature and its potential range by overstressing either its spiritual component at the expense of matter or its material component at the expense of spirit. Instead of realistically acknowledging himself as being composed of matter and form (body and soul), both conjoined in one true and complete substance (cf. p. 104), he is apt to mistake himself for pure matter or pure mind, by either depreciating his material inheritance or by obfuscating his spiritual heritage and destination. In either case of mistaken identity man falls short of that physico-spiritual wholeness or totality which is the unique earmark of his "humanity." Integral materialism or naturalism and integral spiritualism or supranaturalism are the offshoots of such metaphysical misconceptions of man concerning his own nature and his actual position in the universe. While materialism and naturalism are unrealistic in their forgetfulness of man's share in the supraindividual and supratemporal realm

of the spirit, pure spiritualism and supranaturalism are equally unrealistic in their neglectfulness of the material and natural contingencies by which human life is individuated and differentiated. And while this latter view aspires to the abstract idea of a "humanity" emptied of individuality and oblivious to such natural distinctions as sex, race, and nationality, the former view finds itself captivated by these same relative material distinctions, unable to penetrate to that depth in which the individual and the relative reveals itself as permeated and sustained in its existence by the Universal and Absolute.

For a true or realistic understanding of man's unique situation as a rational and social animal it is therefore necessary that our glance take in the lower and lowest as well as the higher and highest reaches of human nature: we must see man not in the abstract but *totaliter individualizatus* (St. Thomas Aquinas), i.e., in his concrete, individual, and personal totality. To comprehend this concrete human being our glance will have to move in two directions: upward, from material flux and change to the changeless realm of spiritual being, and downward, from the mansions of reason and freedom to the deep and vital wellsprings of physical nature. The first view reveals to us man's personal dignity: we follow the movement of his spirit as it freely aspires to the universal by overcoming the limitations of individuality. The second view reveals to us man's membership in the material universe: we see him immersed in the processes of physical generation, growth, and decay, in material being and becoming, in the exuberant richness and vitality of physico-cosmic movements and forces. Both views in their conjunction, therefore, are required for a fully adequate comprehension of the nature of man.

It is in the material and sociopolitical aspect of man's nature that we find the deepest reason for the origin of civil authority and that politically organized society known as *the State*. God, according to the conclusions arrived at in our metaphysical inquiry, is the only being which is "autonomous" in the fullest sense: He exists self-sufficiently in Himself and through Himself (*per se*), whereas all creatures are *ab alio*, depending, first of all, on God and, secondly, more or less on each other. Man is part of the superior, supraindividual

totality of the universe and depends on this superior order and owes allegiance to it, in return for the gifts and aids which he has received and is constantly receiving from it. However, while the relationships between subrational creatures are nonvoluntary or more or less determined by nature, man's relationship to his fellow men bears the imprint of freedom. He is not only an individual part of a superior totality, but he is himself a "whole" or a totality in his own right (*sui generis*) and therefore capable of comprehending and freely embracing this supraindividual or social totality. Human society is thus a whole composed of wholes, i.e., a society of human persons, each of whom is related to the other as well as to the social whole. In other words, the *metaphysical and physical solidarity* which exists throughout the created universe acquires on the human level the additional characteristic of a *moral and spiritual solidarity,* so that each man has a stake in the development not only of his own personal self but in the development of "humanity" or the human race as such. This virtual solidarity may be transformed into an actual one by man's conscious and voluntary moral effort.

In this way man's personal moral good is directly related to the common good of all men or of society as such. Ethics or moral philosophy has therefore not only to deal with the ends of personal life but also with the ends of group life or social life. And this is why Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophy regards political and social science as branches or subdivisions of ethics. The good human life, i.e., a life worthy of a rational animal, is not merely an end of individual but also an end of social or collective morality. The principles of moral philosophy are equally valid for the individual person and for society as a whole. The moral concepts of right and wrong, good and evil, retain their qualitative identity in their application to the life of the individual and to the life of the group, whether it be a question of family affiliation, of tribal association, or of national and international relations. Thus acts of injustice are immoral, whether they are committed by individuals or by social, political, or national groups. Defeating the individual ends of the human person, such acts equally frustrate the common end or common good of the society of human persons. The common or social good, therefore,

must be in harmony with the personal good of the individual, i.e., it must be essentially a *human* good, contributing to the advancement and improvement of individual human persons.

In the gradual realization of his innate possibilities as a rational and sociopolitical animal, man passes through different stages: He is, first of all, a member of a family, next a member of a tribal or ethnic community, and finally a member of a civil society or a national association. In thus enriching his personal self through the fruitful fellowship of group life and civil society, man may find it expedient to enter by his own free choice into various intermediate forms of human companionship and association, such as fraternities, social clubs, occupational or professional corporations, guilds, unions, etc. But while all these forms of human association depend to a greater or lesser extent on the physical and temporal boundaries of race, place, or class, on tribal, political, or national characteristics of group living, there is one all-embracing community in which man may claim membership and citizenship in virtue of the intellectual and moral capacity of his nature: passing from the "City of Man" to the "City of God," man rises from the particular to the universal, finding his spiritual home in a supraracial, supratemporal, and supranatural reality, in that spiritual association which is visibly embodied in the *Church Universal,* in whose vital embrace the material and physical solidarity of the human race and its social groupings acquire their full moral depth and spiritual meaning and direction.

While thus the individual as well as the common or social good have their ultimate source and their sanction in the transcendent sphere of absolute goodness, the social common good as such is not on the same level with the spiritual good of human persons, but rather subordinate to it. While man's personal perfection, owing to his being both a rational and social animal, cannot be fully realized unless his moral action extends beyond his own self to the common social good, this common good in turn is constituted by and must constantly be referred to *the good of human persons,* to their greater moral and spiritual perfection. And yet, even the attainment of all the objectives of the common good in the best of human societies would by itself not suffice to bring about man's highest

moral and spiritual perfection. For while it is the true function of *State and society* to aid man in the pursuit of the natural ends of his personal life, it is the function of *the Church* as the visible manifestation of a superior, supratemporal, and universal society to make it possible for man to attain to the spiritual and supernatural end of his nature. However, as "grace does not efface nature, but rather supports it and leads it to perfection" (cf. p. 121), the aims of State and society and the means employed by them in the realization of these aims must be essentially in harmony with man's ultimate spiritual end or with his perfect beatitude.

§ 20. The Law of Nature and the Moral Law

WE HAVE stated above (cf. pp. 112 and 128) that morality as embodied in human action does not impose on the human soul an external and foreign rule but rather expresses outwardly the universal law of reason, recognized and acknowledged by the human intellect as the law and the voice of God. We have further pointed out that the internal principle or faculty from which human action derives its specifically human or moral character is human reason. Moral action, proceeding from reason as from its internal source, tends toward the welfare and increasing perfection of the human person. Man, however, being both a rational and social animal, needs some regulatory principle which orders his life and his actions with regard to the welfare of the group or with a view to the common good of all. This principle, expressing the norms and rules which are to govern the relations between individual and social good and which are to guide social or group life as such, is commonly designated as *law*.

In contrast to the internal principle of reason, "law" is an external principle of action, having its roots in the objective constitution and order of the universe. However, as man himself is part of this objective and universal order of reality, "law," though confronting him as an external norm, is not foreign to human nature but rather expressive of the same

rational order which permeates the entire realm of being and reality. Thus, in the last analysis, the internal and the external principles of morality are identical, having their common source and the ground of their validity in Divine Reason and Transcendental Being. "The entire community of the universe," writes St. Thomas Aquinas, "is governed by Divine Reason. And so the very basis of the government of things, residing in God as in the ruler of the universe, has the nature of law. And as the Divine Reason is an eternal concept, and not one of the temporal order . . . a law of this kind should be designated as 'Eternal Law.'"[1]

It would seem then that all "law" has its origin in the Divine Reason or in the Supreme Lawgiver of the universe and that this "eternal law" is revealed in the manifold ways in which created beings — inanimate and animate; minerals, plants, and animals — follow the laws of their particular natures. "Since all things which are subject to Divine Providence are regulated and measured by the Eternal Law . . . it is evident that all have some share in it, as by its impress they incline toward their specific activities and ends. The rational creature, like all other creatures, is under Divine Providence, but in a rather unique way: it becomes itself a partaker and dispenser of providence, freely promoting its own welfare and that of others. . . . And such a creaturely participation in the eternal law we call the 'natural law' or the 'law of nature.' Hence, when the Psalmist (Ps. 4:6) says: 'The light of Thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us,' he intends to convey the meaning that the light of natural reason, by which we discern what is good and what evil . . . is nothing but the imprint of the Divine light in us. It follows from this that the natural law expresses the share a rational creature has in the eternal law."[2]

The natural law, or "the unwritten law of nature," accordingly, is simply the order embodied in nature, read and articulated by the human mind. Man, like the rest of creation, is bound by the law of nature, but he is subject to it in a manner that is determined by his own rational nature. For while all subrational creatures follow the law of their natures with an

[1] *Summa Theologica*, I–II, q. 91, a. 1.
[2] St. Thomas Aquinas, *loc. cit.*, a. 2.

unquestioning obedience, man, through his faculty of reason, must, first of all, discover and comprehend this natural law in the created universe and in the depths of his own mind, and he must, secondly, through his faculty of free choice, determine for himself the degree of his conformity to it. In other words, while for all subrational beings the natural law is identical with the physical laws of their natures, *for man the natural law becomes a moral law,* i.e., the adherence to it must be self-determined and self-directed. And while all subrational beings are naturally attuned to the ends which are proportionate to their natures, man must use his intellect and free will to adjust or conform himself to the end that is proportionate to a rational animal.

Human nature as such, then, if rightly understood, establishes the ultimate norm and criterion of the morality of human acts. As far as the physical constitution of man is concerned, every act of which a human being is capable may be said to be in conformity with his *physical* nature. But many acts of man, though in conformity with his physical nature, are out of tune with his rational or moral nature and must therefore be termed immoral or evil. It is a stunted biology which takes account only of man's physical but not of his intellectual and moral nature. Such a "scientific" view of man, therefore, falls short of an integral understanding of human nature and consequently fails to provide criteria of moral judgments and moral acts. No reference to "the mores" and the "accumulated wisdom of the race" will ever be able to discover motivations beyond those of utility and expediency. Such motives, however—unless their anchorage in natural and eternal law is duly recognized—are morally indifferent and therefore incapable of establishing the norms of moral action. By refusing to extend our concept of man beyond the frame of physico-mechanical science, we will at best be in a position to make valid statements as to what actually happens or what possibly may happen, but we shall never be capable of deriving from such a limited scientific frame distinctions of good and evil, right and wrong, or any valid rules regarding human conduct.

It was stated by St. Paul and subsequently reasserted by many ancient and modern authors that the law of nature is

inscribed in the very mind and heart of man: "For when the Gentiles, who have not the law, do *by nature* those things which are of the law, these, having not the law, are a law to themselves: *who show the work of the law written in their hearts.*"[3] From this statement it might appear as if the law of nature were not only the oldest but also the best known of all laws. While the former supposition seems hardly open to doubt, the latter assumption obviously needs some further qualification.

If all men at all times had been thoroughly familiar with the demands of the natural or moral law, then it might be assumed that a majority of them at all times would have acted in accordance with these recognized principles. However, first of all, such a well-nigh universal acquaintance with the natural law can hardly be predicated in the light of human history and experience. Yet even if, for the sake of argument, we were willing to grant such an intimate familiarity of most men with the principles of the natural law, there is still a huge gap between the general knowledge of a principle and its specific application to any number of particular instances and situations. In other words, while the law of nature or the moral law is indeed the oldest and most fundamental of all laws, and while we readily follow St. Paul in asserting that it is written in the innermost heart of man, its discovery as well as its application and realization is fraught with many difficulties.

The natural law is known to man as a kind of "first principle" of morality, demanding in a form so general as to be necessarily somewhat vague that "the good be done and evil be avoided."[4] If, however, we ask ourselves how to act in any particular situation, we are immediately faced with the fact that, owing to the fallibility of human judgment and the indetermination of the human will, we are prone to misinterpret and misapply this primary principle of morality. This is why St. Thomas Aquinas further elaborates on his general formulation of the principle by asking the question: "Can the law of nature be blotted out from the heart of man?" He answers as follows: "First of all, there pertain to the natural law certain

[3] Rom. 2:14–15.
[4] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I–II, q. 94, a. 2.

most general precepts, which are known to all; secondly, there pertain to it certain secondary and more particular precepts, which are, as it were, conclusions derived from these first principles. As to those general principles, the natural law in its universal validity can in no wise be annihilated in the hearts of men; but it can be blotted out in the case of a particular action, in so far as reason is prevented from applying the general principle to a particular act, owing to carnal desire or some other passion. And as to other secondary precepts, the natural law can be blotted out from the hearts of men, either on account of wrong convictions [as errors with regard to necessary conclusions occur also in speculative operations], or on account of depraved customs and corrupt habits. . . ."[5]

We are justified then in maintaining that the law of nature is the oldest of all laws and that it is not only the permanent foundation of all other laws but also the abiding norm to which human acts ought to conform and therewith the objective basis of morality. But man's knowledge of the natural or moral law is more or less imperfect, increasing in perfection in direct proportion to the elevation and purification of man's moral and spiritual nature and the development of his conscience, i.e., of the faculty of his intellect to pass judgment on moral issues and actions. It would, however, be erroneous to think of man's increasing knowledge of the natural law in the terms of "progress" or historic evolution. For we actually find an acute awareness of certain principles of the natural or moral law in some of the most ancient and "primitive" tribal communities,[6] while this awareness appears dimmed to the point of virtual extinction in many highly "civilized" and chronologically very recent epochs of history. It would appear, therefore, that knowledge or ignorance of the natural law is possible wherever human beings live and with their lives practically demonstrate the constancy of human nature in the wide range circumscribed by its dual, physico-spiritual constitution.

[5] *Loc. cit.*, q. 94, a. 6.

[6] Cf. P. Wilhelm Schmidt, *Der Ursprung der Gottesidee*, I–V; 1912–1934. Eng. transl.: *The Origin and Growth of Religion* (London: 1931).

§ 21. The Natural Law and Human Rights

IN THE Western World, from the days of ancient Greece well into the eighteenth century, the basic significance of the natural law for individual and social life has been acknowledged and strongly affirmed by leading philosophers, jurists, statesmen, and men of letters alike. Many of the most illustrious minds of Western Civilization in ancient and modern times (Sophocles, Cicero, St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, Suárez, Vitoria, Grotius, etc.) saw in the natural law not only the permanent foundation of civilized group living but also the most solid bulwark of *human rights*. They realized that man's personal and social obligations as well as his personal and social rights have their roots in human nature and, more specifically, in the distinctive *moral quality* of human nature, i.e., in *human freedom*. Man is not only called upon to do everything in his power to reach his true end and thereby to fulfill his human destiny, but he may also justly or rightfully demand that those goods which are indispensable for the attainment of this goal, and which nature has placed within his reach, are not unjustly or arbitrarily withheld from him. Both his duties and his rightful claims are therefore safeguarded by the absolute norm of the law of nature, whose general principles and statutes define both what can justly be demanded or expected of human nature and to what goods and values human nature in its turn is entitled.

Sophocles, in his *"Antigone,"* offers a striking illustration of the way in which the natural law, the absolute and unconditional basis of individual and collective morality, asserts its authority in the individual, strengthening the human will in its heroic resolve to uphold the natural rights of man, even at the cost of the supreme sacrifice of life itself. Antigone knows that the natural law takes precedence over any positive or man-made law, especially wherever such "law" defies or circumvents the absolute norm of the law of nature. Antigone who, contrary to the explicit orders of King Creon, conducts the time-honored burial rites for her slain brother, and who herself is subsequently buried alive at the king's behest, lays down her life in defense of the natural law, fully aware that this law

as such safeguards and protects the sacred rights of the individual and of the family from the infringements of a tyrannical State or its representative. Sacrificing the temporal to honor the eternal, Antigone affirms the absolute supremacy of the natural law which, as we have pointed out, is itself an expression of the eternal law. And so, justifying her action by invoking the authority of the eternal order of reality, she exclaims: "I owe a more enduring allegiance to the dead than to the living, *for it is in that world that I shall abide forever.*" These words imply the clear realization that the law promulgated by the king — a law which flagrantly contradicts the demands of the natural law — is in reality a perversion of law and therefore without binding force. Creon, on the other hand, sums up his defiance of the eternal, natural, and moral law in words which very appropriately express the creed of all state absolutism: "Whomsoever the City-State may appoint, that man must be obeyed, in things small and great, *in things just and unjust.*"

While the general principles of the natural law are thus of universal validity, the particular interpretations and applications of these principles must necessarily vary in accordance with temporal and local contingencies. It is the function of *positive or human law* to specify and codify these interpretations by means of positive legislation, and thereby to render the abstract precepts of the natural law concrete and adapted to the needs and conditions of different social, political, ethnical, national, and geographic surroundings. As all just positive law is thus chiefly explanatory or declaratory, i.e., a mere projection and concrete application of the natural law, its statutes must be in harmony with the general precepts of the law of nature. Legal statutes, on the other hand, which contradict the law of nature do violence also to human nature. They are unjust laws and are designated as such by St. Thomas Aquinas: "Unjust laws," he writes, "are of two kinds: *first,* they may oppose human welfare, either from the point of view of *the end,* as in the case of a ruler imposing burdens on the people, not for the sake of the common good but to satisfy his greed and for his own greater glory; or from the point of view of *the author* of the law, as in the case of a legislator passing laws which exceed the power entrusted to him; or in

view of *the form,* as in the case of burdens being inequitably imposed on the people, even if this were done in the supposed interest of the common good. Statutes of this kind are not laws but rather acts of violence, for, as Augustine says: 'because it is unjust it cannot be called a law' (*De lib. arb.* I, cap. 5). Therefore such laws do not bind a man's conscience. . . . *Secondly,* laws may be unjust by their opposition to divinely sanctioned goods and values, as the laws of tyrants commanding idolatry or any other thing contrary to the Divine Law. And no one is under obligation to obey such laws, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles (5:29), 'we ought to obey God rather than men.' "[7]

As the purpose of all legislation is the more efficient protection and promotion of the commonweal, it is certainly within the province of human rights to discard obsolete laws and to replace them by new enactments which are better suited to changed conditions: "Those who first tried to discover what is useful for human society were unable to understand and evaluate all the problems involved, and therefore their institutions were imperfect and defective in many respects; but those who came after them changed the prevailing conditions and created institutions which were less inadequate from the point of view of the common weal. . . . Thus a law may rightfully be changed because of changed human conditions, for in different circumstances different conditions are expedient."[8]

Yet while stressing the legitimacy and necessity of change and progress in legal enactments, St. Thomas simultaneously enjoins upon the people and the legislator due respect and reverence for established customs and traditions. Human laws should only be changed if the gain in terms of human welfare is very substantial. The wise ruler and legislator, therefore, always having his mind set on the promotion of the common good, will try to strike a reasonable balance between conservation and change, between tradition and progress.

Human rights, we summarize, are "inalienable," or unconditionally valid, in that they are inherent in the human person, and they take precedence over the claims and rights of all social and political groups, associations, and organizations which as

[7] *Summa Theologica,* I–II, q. 96, a. 4. [8] *Loc. cit.,* q. 97, a. 1.

such have their raison d'être and their frame of reference in human persons. Man, in virtue of the spiritual and moral components of his nature, is the possessor of "inalienable" personal rights, conducive to the attainment of his supratemporal destiny, and these rights correspond in number and substance to the nature of human personality and to the circumference of its perfectibility. The human person possesses these rights prior to being constituted as a member of family, state, and society. These social groups are related to the human person as to *their* end. The *family* is to provide such environmental conditions and influences as are required for the cultivation of personal values, and *State and society* are to supplement the educational functions of the family by furnishing additional aids and means to contribute directly to man's natural and indirectly to his supernatural end and happiness.

As all the natural rights of man have their source in man's rational nature, and as this rationality is shared by all men, it follows that these natural rights are the same for all or that all men are *equal* with regard to their natural rights, all having an equal claim to those means which are indispensable for the attainment of the ends of human personality.

This equality of all men with regard to their natural rights was affirmed in almost identical phraseology by the authors of the French *Declaration of the Rights of Man* (1789) and the American *Declaration of Independence*. But while the French *philosophes* of the pre-revolution and revolution era interpreted the "natural law" in the spirit of eighteenth-century rationalism and naturalism, the American Founding Fathers were not only aware of the rationalism and the "natural religion" of the eighteenth century but were also the spiritual heirs of the Christian theism of the Pilgrim Fathers of the seventeenth century, who bequeathed to them the basic philosophical and theological tenets of the European tradition. Integral Catholicism, too, was represented in their ranks. They did not share with the French *philosophes* the belief that it was possible or desirable to wipe out the past with a stroke of the pen or with the aid of an aroused populace. They would rather have concurred in Joseph De Maistre's acrid criticism of the attempt to reduce the complexity of the natural law and the framework of natural rights to the oversimplified

terms of a mathematical formula: "One of the great errors," wrote this French conservative, "was the belief that a political constitution could be created and written *a priori,* whereas reason and experience unite in establishing the fact that a constitution is a work of Providence. . . ."[9]

What the American Declaration of Independence condenses in the phrase "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," and what was more specifically qualified in the "Bill of Rights," is essentially a reaffirmation of the supratemporal validity of the natural law and of those "inalienable" natural rights with which "all men are endowed by their Creator." In the concrete these rights refer to the prerogative of the human being to be the responsible author or master of his free acts; the right to strive for the perfection of his moral, intellectual, and spiritual life ("pursuit of happiness"); the right to own or acquire those material goods which serve directly man's temporal and indirectly also his eternal welfare; the right of free association, in family relationship as well as in other forms of group living; and the right to enjoy that amount of political, social, and legal equality that is required for the safeguarding of the sacred dignity of human personality.

The opposition to this ancient doctrine of natural law and human rights came in modern times chiefly from two sources: (1) from the type of *liberalism* sponsored by Jean Jacques Rousseau and his followers and (2) from the political *absolutism* embodied in the theory of the "Divine Right of Kings," as proclaimed and defended by James I of England in his "Premonition to All Most Mightie Monarches, Kings, Free Princes, and States of Christendom." This theory of political absolutism merged in the nineteenth century with the political philosophy of the *totalitarian State* or the "Divine Right" of state omnipotence. For Hegel the State is the supreme manifestation of the "World Spirit," of Universal and Absolute Reason and Will, and therefore the one and only source of all rights. The individual has no reality apart from the State, the latter being invested with all the attributes of a fully autonomous or Divine personality.

While political absolutism thus tried to do away with natural

[9] Joseph De Maistre, *Essai sur le Principe générateur des Constitutions politiques,* p. 1.

human rights by absorbing the human person completely in the divinized State-Personality, the *extreme liberalism* of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in righteous protest against all totalitarian claims, carried the doctrine of human rights to an *excessive individualism* which idolized individuality and personality. When Rousseau sounded his battle cry "back to nature," he had in mind Hobbes's primitive "state of nature" rather than the Aristotelian and Thomistic "law of nature." He and the other spokesmen of the revolt against the "ancien régime" called for a society freed from all coercive restraints, a society in which self-sufficient man would be his own lawgiver, unwilling to recognize any norm outside and above his "autonomous" ego.

It is this principle of "atomistic" individualism which in the era of the Industrial Revolution and of capitalistic expansion was so frequently invoked to justify social oppression and the exploitation of one group by another. Dispensing with the sanctions of the natural law, the advocates of "laissez faire" and "rugged individualism" became oblivious to the fact that it cannot be the purpose of society to ensure unrestricted and unrestrained liberty for all, but rather to procure the common good of all, i.e., the good or happiness of all the human persons who constitute what, in an analogical or metaphorical sense, may be called "the social organism." The merely *analogical* meaning of this latter term requires special emphasis because, as has been pointed out, the "social organism" is composed of human persons who, in dignity, intrinsic worth, and legal claims at once precede and transcend the titles and prerogatives of any collective "body." The "social organism," unlike a biological organism, exists for the sake, i.e., the perfection, of its individual members, not vice versa. It has no reality apart from these members, while its members have a reality of their own apart from it, but achieve a higher and fuller degree of realization in virtue of the heightened efficiency produced by the cooperative efforts of the "social organism."

Hegel's ideas concerning the origin and nature of natural rights were shared by all the thinkers of the positivistic and "historical" schools of political and social philosophy such as Bentham, Comte, Spencer, etc. The representatives of the "historical school of law" in Germany in the nineteenth century

adopted the antimetaphysical bias of the positivists in denouncing the natural law with its inherent natural rights as an empty abstraction or an arbitrary and fictitious construct. They insisted that all law was positive or man-made law and that all legal enactments and statutes were the products of the *Volksgeist* (folk spirit) and as such represented a normative codification of historically evolved manners and customs.

As against this historical positivism it may be appropriate to quote the British statesman and historian, Edmund Burke, who, in his attempt to mediate between revolutionary progressivism and inert traditionalism, stressed the permanent metaphysical foundation of "law" and summarized the ancient teachings as follows: "It would be hard to point out any error more truly subversive of all the order and beauty, of all the peace and happiness of human society, than the position that any body of men have a right to make what laws they please; or that laws can derive any authority from their institution . . . independent of the quality of the subject matter. . . . In reality there are two, and only two, foundations of law: I mean equity and utility. With respect to the former, it grows out of the great rule of equality, which is grounded upon our common nature, and which Philo . . . calls the mother of justice. All human laws are, properly speaking, *only declaratory;* they may alter the mode and application, but have no power over the substance of original justice. The other foundation of law, which is utility, must be understood, not of partial or limited, but of general and public utility (the "common good") . . . derived directly from our rational nature; for any other utility may be the utility of a robber, but cannot be that of a citizen . . . of a member of the commonwealth."[10]

Edmund Burke thus concurs with Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas in the conviction that the normative bases of all law are eternal, that these eternal norms express the will of the Eternal God, and that this will is manifested in the order of being and can be deciphered on the pages of the book of nature. The eternal norms of the law of nature can therefore not be ignored by positive legislation without detriment to State and society and without grievous harm to the individuals by whom these collective bodies are constituted.

[10] Edmund Burke, *Correspondence,* II, p. 311.

§ 22. The Nature of Justice

THE equality of all men with regard to their natural rights requires that their mutual relations be subject to certain rules, by means of which this equality is, firstly, put forward as an ideal demand and, secondly, practically realized to the greatest possible extent. These rules, however, cannot be devised or arbitrarily imposed, but must grow out of a certain disposition or inclination on the part of man to deal fairly with others of his kind or "to give everyone his due." This moral disposition of human nature, "the steady, unceasing will to give every man his due,"[11] is called *justice* and, according to some of the representative ancient and medieval philosophers, it is *the queen of all the moral virtues.* Justice may be termed the supreme moral virtue because, subjectively, it is most closely associated with reason and free will, the two highest ranking human faculties, and because it has as its object the good of other human beings of equal rank and dignity.

What is due to some object or being is that which is commensurate or proportionate to its nature and mode of existence. As each thing individually is proportioned to its own end, so also all things or created beings are collectively ordered and proportioned to each other, in accordance with the varying constitution of their natures. What is due to a *human person* is accordingly determined and circumscribed by those human rights which are commensurate to human nature and which are themselves grounded in the natural law. What is due to each and all according to the unchanging norms of the law of nature is expressed in terms of legal rights and obligations, and the concepts of justice make manifest the undeviating resolve on the part of human beings to effect in human behavior and human relations conformity with the eternal order of the natural law and thus to safeguard the inviolable and incommunicable rights of persons and groups.

The end or object of justice is either the regulation of the conduct and dealings of persons with persons or the regulation of the relationship between individual persons and society

[11] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* II–II, q. 58, a. 1.

as a whole. In accordance with these different ends moral philosophy distinguishes between *commutative* and *distributive justice*. Commutative justice, referring primarily to contracts or exchanges (*commutationes*), either between individual persons or between groups of persons, also includes contractual or legal relationships between States or nations, which may be described in an analogical sense as collective personalities endowed with equal natural rights and obligations. Distributive justice, on the other hand, as implied in the name, is concerned with the problems of the *equitable distribution* of those goods to which all the members of a State or society are entitled in virtue of their common human nature. The exercise of the functions of distributive justice is among the foremost obligations and responsibilities of the State or the government acting as the representative of the entire community. The just claims of individuals to their relative share in the goods of the commonwealth is to be determined by the productive capacity and effort of individuals and groups. As far as the equitable distribution of *economic goods* is concerned, the administration of distributive justice rests primarily with the employers, while the State is to assume the role of supreme arbiter in case the individual employer fails to meet his obligations.

Closely associated with the concepts of distributive justice are the demands of *social justice,* a term which came into use in connection with the social upheavals engendered by the Industrial Revolution and the subsequent increasing tension in capital-labor relationships. The requirements of social justice were strongly emphasized and specifically defined in Pope Pius XI's Encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931). According to this papal document, the object of social justice is the common good viewed as relating to and including the good of all individual persons who constitute the commonwealth. This common good, it is maintained, can only be realized if all the material goods of the world are distributed among individuals in accordance with the demands of justice and equity. While all the members of society are called upon individually and collectively to promote the object of social justice, it is incumbent upon *the State* to see to it that all the available physical, legal, and moral means are employed in a determined effort to realize

this objective, i.e., to make each and everyone benefit from the social actualization of the common good.

In his Encyclical *Divini Redemptoris* (1937) Pius XI enlarged upon the general directions of *Quadragesimo Anno* by further enjoining upon the States their obligations relative to the attainment of the ends of social justice: "It is impossible to care for the social organism and the good of society," the Pontiff wrote, "unless each single part and each individual member, i.e., each individual man in the dignity of his human personality, is supplied with everything that is necessary for the exercise of his social functions. . . . Social justice cannot be said to have been satisfied as long as workingmen are denied a salary that would enable them to secure proper sustenance for themselves and for their families; as long as they are denied the opportunity of acquiring a modest fortune . . . as long as they cannot make suitable provision through public or private insurance for old age, illness, and unemployment. It must be the special care of the State to create those material conditions of life without which an orderly society cannot exist. The State must take every measure to supply employment, particularly for the heads of families and for the young. . . . The wealthy classes must be induced to assume those burdens without which human society cannot be saved nor they themselves remain secure. And measures taken by the State with this end in view must be of such a nature that they will really affect those who actually possess more than their share of capital resources, and who continue to accumulate them to the grievous detriment of others."

The ends of justice are more or less frustrated by laying too much stress on either its commutative or distributive aspect, at the expense of a healthy balance between these two forms of justice. The extreme individualism, for example, advanced by the "physiocratic school" of economy in France (Quesnay, Turgot, etc.) and again by the so-called "classical" political economists in England (Adam Smith, Ricardo, James Mill, etc.), wanted to reduce the activities of state government or group legislation to the exercise of the purely restrictive functions of the protection of property rights ("policeman theory of the State"); they thereby failed to recognize the legitimate

claims of distributive and social justice. Collectivism, on the other hand, in both its socialist and fascist branches, regarding the State or society as the absolute end and individual man as a mere means, tends to neglect the just claims of commutative justice or private, individual law (Machiavelli, Hobbes, Hegel, Marx, etc.). The "via media" between these two extremes calls for the proper adjustment of the mutually supplementary claims of group law and private law, of distributive and commutative justice. Both types of justice have their ground in the equality of natural human rights, but they aim at the realization of this equality in different ways. While distributive justice takes into consideration the proportionate, intrinsic and extrinsic worth of human persons in their relationship to society as a whole, commutative justice is "strict justice" in the sense that it considers all members of society as parties with strictly equal rights or claims; it thus aims not at proportionate but at absolute equality. Commenting on the demands of commutative justice, *Aristotle* therefore wrote: "It makes no difference whether a robbery, for instance, is committed by a good man on a bad man or by a bad man on a good man, nor whether adultery is committed by a good man or by a bad man: the (strict, commutative) law looks only to the difference created by the injury and treats the men as previously equal, where the one does and the other suffers injury, or the one has done and the other suffered harm. And so . . . the judge tries to restore equality by penalty."[12]

[12] Aristotle, *Nich. Eth.*, V, 4, 1132[a].

§ 23. Man and the State

WE HAVE had occasion several times to refer to the problem of the State, in connection with the social urges of human nature (cf. p. 144), the need of organized group life in accordance with the demands of the natural law (cf. p. pp. 155 sq.), in the course of the discussion on the nature of human equality and human rights, and in our attempt to determine the rules and requirements of justice (cf. pp. 160 sq.). It is, however, necessary to supplement these incidental refer-

ences by a more detailed analysis of the principal concepts of the philosophy of the State, involving both the institutional character of government and its relationships with individual human beings as well as with human nature as such. This philosophical inquiry may be expected to yield important directives for the entire field of political science, considered as a subdivision of moral philosophy.

A) *THE ORIGIN OF THE STATE*

The philosophy of the State has received a great deal of attention and emphasis in the history of Western thought, from the ancient Greeks down to the political theorists and philosophers of our own time. There is no lack of blueprints for desirable systems of state government, either in the form of "state utopias"[13] or in the form of pedagogical precepts for the model prince or ruler.[14] Beyond these more or less abstract treatments of the principles of state philosophy we find in every century a large body of writings devoted to various philosophical aspects of political theory but, notwithstanding the spatial and temporal distances which frequently separate the individual authors, we are able to recognize several patterns which are identified without difficulty as the main currents of the metaphysical and moral convictions embodied in the Western Tradition.[15]

Many of these writings concern themselves directly with theories relating to the origin of the State and the original sources of the titles of sovereignty. Here we distinguish in the main two points of view, the one holding that States originate by the deliberate choice of the individuals, who decide to safeguard their common interests by means of a *social compact,* and the other maintaining that the State develops organically

[13] Cf. Plato's *Republic,* St. Thomas More's *Utopia,* Campanella's *Civitas Solis,* Francis Bacon's *Nova Atlantis,* etc.

[14] These precepts range all the way from lofty idealism to brutal cynicism, from the idealistic pattern of St. Thomas Aquinas' *De Regimine Principum* and Fénelon's *Télémaque* to the cynical variety of Machiavelli's *Il Principe.* In a category by themselves are works like Hobbes' *Leviathan* and their contemporary counterparts (works by Hitler, Alfred Rosenberg, N. J. Spykman, etc.), in which the State is seen exclusively under the aspect of power and physical compulsion, and human relations appear essentially based on selfishness, greed, and hate (Hobbes, *Homo homini lupus:* "man is a wolf unto man"). This latter is the state philosophy adhered to and advocated by most of the self-styled "political realists."

[15] Cf. Carlyle, R. W., and A. J., *History of Mediaeval Political Theory in the West,* 6 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1916).

as a *natural expansion of the family and the clan.* Aristotle and his medieval and modern disciples accept the latter explanation, while the followers of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau lean toward the social compact theory. According to Hobbes the origination of the State marks the passage of man from the primitive "state of nature" to a condition of what might be termed "disciplined anarchy": "He may come out of it," Hobbes writes, "through the passions for peace and fear of death and by reason suggesting articles of peace which are called laws of nature."[16] John Locke agrees with Hobbes as to the anarchical conditions which characterize the "state of nature," but he opposes Hobbes in that he attributes to man natural rights and a natural executive power, even in the "state of nature." This natural executive power of the individual is eventually transferred to the public or to the State by means of compact or convention.

The *social contract theory* was carried farthest by Jean Jacques Rousseau, for whom this contract becomes the foundation of all civil authority and therewith of all civic rights and obligations, so that no such rights and obligations exist prior to their declaration by a political society or a State. Rousseau shares with Hobbes the conviction that man has risen from the anarchical savagery of the "state of nature" to a state of relative civil order by means of a set of conventional agreements, and that therefore convention rather than the "natural law" is the basis of all orderly human relations: "The social order," he says, "is a sacred right which is the basis of all other rights. Nevertheless, this right does not come from nature and must, therefore, be founded on conventions. . . . Conventions form the basis of all legitimate authority."[17] For Rousseau as later on for Hegel the body politic exists as a distinct "moral person," aside from and above the individuals who constitute the State, and this collective "personality" is generated, according to Rousseau, "by the total alienation to the whole community of each associate with all his rights."[18]

[16] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan,* Chap. XIII.

[17] J. J. Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (Everyman's Library), p. 12.

[18] Cf. these quotations from Rousseau's *contrat social* with Benito Mussolini's description of the fascist totalitarian State: "The Fascist State, the highest and most potent form of personality. . . . It absorbs all the forms of man's moral and intellectual life. . . . The State, the veritable reality of the individual . . . is the creator of all right" (*Scritti e Discorsi,* 1926).

Against these political theories which make artificial conventions or more or less arbitrary contracts the bases of state authority, civic rights, and orderly human relations, stands a solid block of Western thinkers, for whom all titles of authority and all rights are derived from and have their binding force in the natural law and ultimately in the eternal law of God. But since, as we have seen (cf. pp. 147 sq.), this natural law is merely the external form and norm of the law of reason and therefore in harmony with the nature and object of man's "rational appetite," all social and political associations require for their validity and durability the element of *free and mutual consent.* This holds true of the constitutions of States no less than of vocational, occupational, and family relations. All these relationships involve both rights and obligations, all of which have their source and sanction in the natural law. It may thus be said that in this ancient Western theory of the origin and organic growth of the State out of the communal life of family and tribe, the elements of tradition and progress, natural evolution, and voluntary contract are combined and harmonized. This fact is stressed by St. Thomas Aquinas when, after having underscored the basic significance of the natural law in all human relations, he subscribes to St. Augustine's definition of a political society as "a multitude united by juridical consent and a community of interests."[19] Hence he arrives at the logical conclusion that in the best State the people should have a share in government and in the choice of their rulers: "For the best form of government in any State or Kingdom," St. Thomas writes, "it is required that one man, superior in virtue, be at the head; under him are others, equally excellent in character; and yet, such sovereignty is shared by all because these rulers cannot only be selected from among all the people but are actually elected by them."[20]

B) *PRINCIPLES AND FORMS OF GOVERNMENT*

1) *Plato.* The *medieval theory of government by title of natural law and voluntary consent* had been prepared in antiquity in the political philosophy of Plato and Aristotle.

[19] *Summa Theologica,* II–II, q. 42, a. 2.
[20] *Summa Theologica,* I–II, q. 105, a. 1.

In the *Republic* Plato makes the important observation that the different forms of States reflect different dispositions of human character and that, therefore, "the States are as the men are."[21] With this general pattern in mind, he distinguishes *five* different *types of government,* corresponding to *five* different *states of mind:* they are *monarchy or aristocracy* (government of justice); *timocracy* (government of honor); *oligarchy* (government of greed); *democracy* (government of laissez faire); and *tyranny* (government of lawless power). With great ingenuity Plato describes the gradual transformation of one form of government into the next inferior type, until finally the corruption of the best (aristocracy) gives rise to the birth of the worst (tyranny).

While in aristocracy and timocracy the criteria of rulership are specific virtues of the soul, oligarchy makes the possession of property or money the qualifications of rulership as well as of citizenship. The State is then divided by the conflicting interests of the rich and the poor, and this results in creeping corruption within and the inability to present a united front to the enemy without: "Either they arm the multitude, and then they are more afraid of them than of the enemy; or, if they do not call them out in the hour of battle, they are oligarchs indeed: few to fight as they are few to rule. And at the same time their fondness for money makes them unwilling to pay taxes."[22]

The *oligarchic State,* aiming at the greatest possible accumulation of wealth, is as much frustrated in its pursuit of this end as is the individual citizen who strives for the same goal, because the desire for riches is always insatiable. The rulers of such a State indulge in a life of luxury and idleness and become increasingly incapable of resisting either pleasure or pain. And so "*democracy* comes into being, after the poor have conquered their opponents, slaughtering some and banishing some, while to the remainder they give an equal share of freedom and power; and this is the form of government in which the magistrates are commonly elected by lot."[23] To a superficial observer it would seem that the citizens of such a

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[21] *Republic,* VIII, 544 (B. Jowett's transl.).
[22] Plato, *loc. cit.,* VIII, 551.
[23] Plato, *loc. cit.,* VIII, 557.

State are the freest and happiest of all. Everyone is at liberty to say and do whatever he pleases, and the State looks "like an embroidered robe which is spangled with every sort of flower, and . . . there are many to whom this State, which is spangled with the manners and characters of all mankind, will appear to be the fairest of States."[24] No one is required to rule or be ruled, or "to go to war when the rest go to war, or to be at peace when others are at peace, unless you are so disposed: . . . a charming form of government, full of variety and disorder, and dispensing a sort of equality to equals and unequals alike."[25]

And as this democratic State is, so are the individuals of whom it is composed: their souls are inhabited by disorderly and contradictory motivations and desires; they lack intellectual and moral discipline and are full of "false and boastful conceits and phrases. . . . Insolence they term breeding, anarchy they call liberty, waste they term magnificence, and impudence they mistake for courage. And so the young man passes . . . into the freedom and libertinism of useless and unnecessary pleasures. . . . And if anyone says to him that some pleasures are the satisfactions of good and noble desires, and others of evil desires, and that he ought to use and honor some and chastise and master the others . . . he shakes his head and says that they are all alike, and that one is as good as another. . . . He lives from day to day, indulging the appetite of the hour; and sometimes he is lapped in drink and strains of the flute; then he becomes a water drinker, and tries to get thin; then he takes a turn at gymnastics. . . . His life has neither law nor order; and this distracted existence he terms joy and bliss and freedom. . . ."[26]

As, according to Plato, the cause of the rise of democracy was the excessive wealth of the oligarchic State, so the *tyrannical State* springs from the *excess of a democratic freedom* which has turned into *license:* Having "drunk too deeply from the strong wine of freedom," the citizen no longer recognizes any authority; the distinctions of age, sex, and personal worth are gradually obliterated, and anarchy begins to invade

[24] *Loc. cit.*, VIII, 557.
[25] *Loc. cit.*, VIII, 557.
[26] *Loc. cit.*, VIII, 561.

the precincts of public and private life, disorganizing all human relations: "The father grows accustomed to descend to the level of his sons and to fear them, and the son is on a level with his father, he having no respect or reverence for either of his parents . . . and the metic (resident alien) is equal with the citizen and the citizen with the metic. . . . The teacher fears and flatters his pupils, and the pupils despise their masters and tutors; young and old are all alike; and the young man is on a level with the old . . . and old men adopt the manners of the young . . . nor must I forget to tell of the liberty and equality of the two sexes in relation to each other . . . and all things are just ready to burst with liberty." The citizens "chafe impatiently at the least touch of authority and at length . . . cease to care even for the laws, written or unwritten." The truth is "that *the excessive increase of anything often causes a reaction in the opposite direction;* and this is the case not only in the seasons and in vegetable and animal life but, above all, in forms of government." Thus "the *excess of liberty,* whether in States or individuals, seems only to pass into an *excess of slavery*. And so *tyranny* naturally arises out of democracy, and the most aggravated form of tyranny out of the most extreme form of liberty."[27]

The growing anarchy in public and private life finally makes the people look for a protector, and soon the protector turns into a tyrant: He surrounds himself with a bodyguard, willingly granted him by the people, who still see in the tyrant their friend: "All their fears are for him — they have none for themselves. . . . At first, in the early days of his power, he is full of smiles, and he salutes everyone whom he meets . . . he makes promises in public and also in private, liberating debtors, and distributing land to the people and to his followers, and wanting to be so kind and good to everyone! But when he has disposed of foreign enemies by conquest or treaty . . . then he is always stirring up some war or other, in order that the people may require a leader."[28]

As a result of the sufferings and privations caused by foreign wars and internal unrest, the tyrant begins to grow unpopular. Some of those who aided his rise to power turn against him,

[27] *Loc. cit.*
[28-31] *Loc. cit.*, VIII, 562 sqq., and IX, 578 sq.

and then follows the "blood purge": "He must look about him and see who is valiant, who is high-minded, who is wise, who is wealthy . . . he is the enemy of all, and must seek occasion against them whether he will or no, until he has made a purgation of the State."[29] But the tyrant himself is the most miserable of all men: nominally the master of all, he is the real slave, not even able to master himself. He "is obliged to practise the greatest adulation and servility, and to be the flatterer of the vilest of mankind. He has desires which he is utterly unable to satisfy, and . . . he is truly poor . . . all his life long he is beset with fear and is full of convulsions and distractions, even as the State which he resembles."[30] Increasingly "he becomes . . . more jealous, more faithless, more unjust, more friendless, more impious . . . he is the purveyor and cherisher of every sort of vice, and the consequence is that he is supremely miserable, and that he makes everybody else as miserable as himself."[31]

We have quoted from Plato's *Republic* at such length, not only because the philosopher describes realistically political conditions, situations, and sociopolitical transformations which are a matter of historical record, but also because he anticipates with his observations on the law of action and reaction, as evidenced in historic evolution, some theories of much more recent date, such as Hegel's "dialectical triad" of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, or Karl Marx's, Nietzsche's, Spengler's, and Sorokin's ideas on cyclical historical movements.[32] In Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil* we find a passage which describes the transition from excessive liberty to excessive slavery in terms which almost verbally repeat Plato's argument. Speaking of the increasing democratization of Europe and of the growing "assimilation" taking place among Europeans, he writes: "While the collective impression of such future Europeans will probably be that of numerous, talkative, weak-willed, and very handy workmen who require a master, a leader, as they require their daily bread; while, therefore, the democratizing of Europe will tend to the production of a type prepared for slavery in the most subtle sense of the term: the strong will necessarily in individual and exceptional cases be-

[32] Cf. Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra;* O. Spengler's *The Decline of the West;* P. Sorokin's *The Crisis of Our Age.*

come stronger and richer than he has perhaps ever been before . . . owing to the immense variety of practice, art, and disguise. I meant to say that the democratizing of Europe is at the same time an involuntary arrangement for the rearing of *tyrants*. . . ."[33]

While for Nietzsche democracy or government by popular consent and representation is indiscriminately indicted as indicative of decline and decadence, Plato distinguishes between a democratic rule which is anchored in the *supremacy of the law* and a democracy which has forgotten or discarded the sanctions of the natural and moral law and in which license is therefore mistaken for liberty. This distinction is made very clear in *The Laws,* the last and in many respects most mature of Plato's Dialogues, in which he offers his own corrective of the more abstract and utopian blueprint of the ideal State as outlined in the *Republic.* While in the *Republic* it had been stated that in the perfect commonwealth the king must be a philosopher or the philosopher a king, in the *Laws* Plato takes a more realistic view and is satisfied with rulers who are righteous and prudent. The supreme authority, ruling over both the State and its magistrates, is "the law." Plato thus actually advocates what Montesquieu (1689–1755) called a "mixed" form of government, i.e., a constitution which combines the advantages of monarchical, aristocratic, and democratic rule. While monarchies and aristocracies place the chief emphasis on unity or even uniformity, democracies extol freedom. The final aim of political endeavor, according to the language used in the *Laws,* must be the attainment of a union of authority and freedom, unity and variety, monarchico-aristocratic and democratic rule. For an excess of authority leads to absolutism, autocracy, and tyranny, and an excess of freedom leads to mob rule and anarchy. The final end of all good government is the rearing of the highest type of human personality, and the authors of constitutions as well as the actual rulers, i.e., the executors of constitutional law, must be fully aware of this goal. If, therefore, they have false or confused ideas, either as to the true end of good government or as to the nature of man, their rule will necessarily reflect the perversion of their ideas, and the political and social well-being

[33] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* (The Modern Library), p. 174.

of their States and of their peoples will accordingly be thwarted.

2) *Aristotle.* For Aristotle as much as for Plato the State has an eminent educational task. It is the supreme obligation of the State not only to promote the happiness of its citizens but also to teach them what constitutes true happiness and to inculcate in them the individual and social virtues. But while Plato's speculation on the ideal State is deeply impregnated with religious and theological concepts, Aristotle's philosophy of the State concerns itself only with the prerequisites of the good and virtuous life of citizens and communes, here and now. For him *the individual* is the primary reality, and he therefore endeavors to establish the necessary safeguards for the protection and preservation of individual rights. It is thus one of the chief obligations of the State to see to it that all just individual claims and interests are duly satisfied.

Aristotle's enumeration of *six* possible forms of government agrees essentially with Plato's classification. He distinguishes between *three types of good government* and *three types of bad government.* The criterion of all good government is the direction toward the achievement of the common good. This end may be pursued either by one sovereign ruler (monarchy); or by an elite of highly qualified leaders (aristocracy); or by participation of the body of citizens (polity). However, when the personal advantage of the rulers, or of the ruling classes, or of the people's representatives, becomes the end of government, then good government degenerates: monarchy turns into *tyranny,* aristocracy into *oligarchy,* polity into *democracy.*

It is evident from this brief summary of Aristotle's views on government that we meet here with the same distinction between two types of "democracy" which we noted in Plato's political philosophy. To use modern phraseology, we might term the one "Jeffersonian," the other "Rousseauan" democracy, the former having its source and sanction in the supremacy of law and in the "inalienable rights" of man, the latter resting on the assumption of "the total alienation" of these rights "to the whole community" by means of a "social contract," and therewith on the voluntary submission of the individual to the collective and arbitrary will of shifting majorities (cf. p. 164).

The increased emphasis which Aristotle places on the indi-

vidual makes him a strong advocate of a citizen's right to a proportionate share in political rule. In principle, all citizens, according to Aristotle, have a natural claim to civil office, but only those who are intellectually and morally pre-eminently qualified should be elected to the highest offices by the choice of the freemen.[34] While Aristotle admits that in most of the actually existing States the social order must be safeguarded by legal statutes, he visualizes the State of the future from the perspective of a growing personal freedom and self-determination, resulting from moral and political education. In such a future commonwealth of freemen it will be wiser to invest with authority the entire people than one or several prominent and specially qualified individuals.

Aristotle, as was pointed out (cf. pp. 163 sq.), traces civil government back to its origins in the family and the clan. Thus the civil powers in primitive society derive their authority from the patriarchal rule prevalent in the primitive family and tribe. The further stages in the development of sovereignty and the passage from one type of government to another are described by Aristotle in the following way: "The first governments were kingships, and the reason was probably this: when cities were small, men of eminent virtue were few. They were made kings because they were benefactors. . . . But when many persons equal in merit grew up and were no longer willing to endure the pre-eminence of one, they desired to have a commonwealth, and set up a constitution. The ruling class soon deteriorated and began to enrich themselves out of the public treasury. Riches became the path to honor, and so oligarchies naturally came into being. These in turn passed into tyrannies, and tyrannies into democracies; for love of gain in the ruling classes tended to diminish their number and to strengthen the masses, who in the end set upon their masters and established democracies. And since cities have increased in size, no other form of government seems to be any longer possible."[35]

Reviewing the basic concepts of the political philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, we find them both wrestling with the central problem of the relationship of the individual to the

[34] Cf. Aristotle, *Politics*, I, 12; II, 2; IV, 3.
[35] *Loc. cit.*, III, 15.

State. In Plato's philosophy of the State the ideal commonwealth requires the rule of a "kingly man" who possesses the virtues of righteousness and prudence. But because the ruler is a servant of the law, and because the law is the protector of individual rights, the Platonic State seems to strike a middle course between absolute autocracy and democratic liberty. For Aristotle even more than for Plato the quality of the State is determined by the quality of the individuals of whom it is composed and by the temper of their mutual relationships. Plato, by stressing the abstract and spiritual components of rulership, seems at times, especially in the "Republic," to deprive the individual members of the State of the prerogatives of their personality, whereas Aristotle, who emphasizes the natural and material aspects of communal life, never loses sight of the needs and wants of the individual citizen. For him the best and most desirable state of affairs is not reached until every citizen has become his own lawgiver, so that the barriers of rigid and impersonal statutes may gradually be removed.

3) *St. Thomas Aquinas.* As in most of the other departments of philosophy so also in their social and political speculation the medieval schoolmen and, above all, St. Thomas Aquinas present us with a *synthesis of Plato and Aristotle.* While St. Thomas discusses the problem of the State and the functions of government in many passages of his major works, he gives special attention to the subject in the treatise entitled "On the Governance of Rulers,"[36] composed as a manual for a young king of Cyprus, who died in 1267, and whose identity has never been established with certainty. The first and part of the second book were written by St. Thomas, the remainder by Ptolemy of Lucca, one of the master's pupils. Although the small volume contains a condensed summary of St. Thomas' political philosophy, the treatment of the subject matter is in part theological, and frequent reference is made to Scriptural authority. The essay deals with the origin of government, the nature and titles of sovereignty, the different forms of government, and the duties of rulers.

St. Thomas demonstrates the need for social and political

[36] *De Regimine Principum.* Transl. by Gerald B. Phelan (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1938).

authority from the nature of man (cf. pp. 141 sq.). This authority manifests itself in expanding social units, first in the father of the family, then in the head of a village community, and finally in the ruler or king of a land. The idea that civil authority derives from the individuals who constitute these social units — in itself essentially Aristotelian — receives strong metaphysical support from the inclusion of the Platonic notion that unity precedes multiplicity and from the added insistence of *Christian philosophy* that all titles of authority depend ultimately on the one and only ruler of the universe.

Like Plato and Aristotle, St. Thomas distinguishes between different types of good and bad, just and unjust government. All good government tends toward the actualization of the common good: "If a group of free men is governed by their ruler for the common good of the group, that government will be right and just, as is suitable to free men. If, however, the government is organized not for the common good of the group but for the private interest of the ruler, it will be an unjust and perverted government."[37]

Just forms of government are *polity* ("Jeffersonian" democracy), *aristocracy,* and *monarchy,* the implication being that authority is either vested in a large group of virtuous men, or in a few, or in one. *Unjust* forms of government are *democracy, oligarchy,* and *tyranny,* i.e., authority is either in the hands of the indiscriminative mob, or it is exercised by a group of greedy and wicked men, or it is usurped by one depraved individual. While from the description given in *De Regimine Principum* it might appear as if St. Thomas were giving unqualified preference to monarchical rule, we gather from the supplementary expositions contained in his other works that, in speaking of the best form of government, the philosopher has in mind a limited or *constitutional* and preferably *nonhereditary monarchy,* or a "mixed" form of rulership, including the principle of election and, to some extent, popular representation, i.e., a form of government in which the positive characteristics of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy are united. While such a constitutional monarchy is designated as the best form of government, the worst form of unjust rule is *tyranny.*

[37] St. Thomas Aquinas, *loc. cit.,* p. 37.

As to the *functions of government,* St. Thomas points out that it is the meaning of all rulership to lead that which is ruled to its proper end. It is therefore the primary duty of the leaders of a State to promote the well-being, happiness, and virtue of their subjects. But in order to attain this primary end, several secondary ends must be realized. Above all, it must be the concern of the ruler "to procure the unity of peace." Both St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas are agreed that the *preservation of peace* is an essential prerequisite of the virtue and happiness of the citizens of a commonwealth. Next follows the demand that a multitude, thus united in the bond of peace, be guided to the performance of *good deeds.* Thirdly, the rulers of the State are to foster the *material welfare* of their lands by creating favorable economic conditions, because without a sufficient supply of the things required for decent human living, the realization of the primary ends of the State, i.e., the citizens' virtue and happiness, would be jeopardized. A competent administration will take care that the available goods are justly distributed so that everyone may receive what is his due according to his services and functions in the commonwealth. Thus the status of the individual and therewith his claims to a proportionate share in the available goods are not determined by property or wealth but by *social function and social performance.*

Generally speaking, all good government ought to follow the pattern of the government of the universe, as all the works of man are the more perfect the more he follows in his modes of operation the order and the laws of the works of nature. Man is a microcosm, a small world mirroring the vast universe: "Just as the universe of corporeal creatures and all spiritual powers are under the Divine government, in like manner are the members of the body and the powers of the soul controlled by reason, and thus, in a certain proportionate manner, reason is to man what God is to the world."[38] If, therefore, we inquire how the soul acts in the body and how God acts in the universe, we shall learn how the ruler ought to act in his land. In other words, the Divine rule of the universe serves as the pattern or model of a well-ruled kingdom

[38] St. Thomas Aquinas, *loc. cit.*, pp. 89 sq.

or commonwealth: "The way to govern may be learned from the governance of the world."[39]

In the last analysis the end of State and society is the same as the end of the individual. If this ultimate end were a physical, corporeal one, then a physician might be the ideal ruler. If that ultimate end were an abundance of wealth, then some financier would be the ideal king. If the knowledge of truth were the ultimate end, then a teacher might best exercise the functions of government: "But it is clear that the end of any multitude gathered together is the *life of virtue.* For men form groups for the purpose of living well together, a thing which the individual man living alone could not attain. But a good life is a virtuous life. Therefore a virtuous life is the end for which men form groups."[40]

The ultimate end of individual man as well as of the men grouped together in States and societies is to attain through virtuous living to the possession of God and therewith to their eternal happiness. But, for the reasons pointed out by St. Thomas Aquinas, to lead man to this last end transcends the power and authority of the State and its rulers: "The task of leading man to that end does not pertain to human government but to Divine."[41] To Christ it attributed a Universal Kingdom and a Universal Kingship extending over all creation. And from this Kingship is derived a royal priesthood, entrusted with the earthly government of Christ's Kingdom. Authority, according to St. Thomas, is the nobler the higher its end, and therefore a ruler who represents the ultimate end is above rulers who are concerned with those secondary ends which are subordinate to the highest and ultimate end. St. Thomas therefore teaches both an indirect and a direct power of the Church: an indirect power in such temporal matters as bear some relation to supratemporal ends, and a direct power in all matters pertaining directly to man's and society's moral and spiritual ends.

The sociology and political philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas are entirely rooted in the central metaphysical, ethical, and theological concepts of Christianity. The tasks assigned to the State and the rights and obligations assigned to man in

[39] *Loc. cit.*, p. 95.
[40] *Loc. cit.*, p. 97.
[41] *Loc. cit.*, p. 98.

his relationship to the State are determined by the place which both, man and the State, occupy in the graduated structure of a universal realm of means, purposes, and ends, ascending from the plane of matter and sense to that of moral, social, and intellectual purpose, and from there to the still higher plane of supernatural ends. Nature and supernature, State and Church, fallen and redeemed humanity, and the prospect of the future life of perfect beatitude — they are all included in the all-embracing idea of the *Corpus Christianum,* i.e., the organic totality of the Christian body politic. The major motivating forces which animate and vitalize this body are the love of God and the love of man. The individual members of this body complement each other in their mutual cooperative love and in their common love of God. Thus the Platonic and Aristotelian idea of a society aiming at the common good fuses with and is crowned by the idea of the natural and supernatural destiny of the individual members of the social whole. Each of these members possesses an end and a dignity of his own, and this places upon him the responsibility and obligation to assist each other member in the attainment of his spiritual end.

From this unique destiny of the human person and from the unique dignity and personal responsibility conferred upon each and every human being by the author of nature derive the prerogatives and obligations of the individual conscience with regard to the claims and demands of the State. St. Thomas Aquinas stresses these rights of conscience in his discussion of the question of popular *resistance to unjust rule.* In accordance with medieval political theory the philosopher insists that the ruler holds his authority by virtue of an unwritten contract or covenant with his subjects, the specific terms of such a covenant being determined by law and custom as embodied in past grants, decisions, or agreements. The ruler therefore has no right to abrogate or nullify these terms without mutual consent: "If the people are free and able to make their own laws, the consent of the people expressed by a custom counts far more than the authority of the sovereign, who has no power to enact laws except as representing the will of the people."[42] And, as if in continuation of this line of thought,

[42] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* I–II, q. 97, a. 3, ad 3.

we read in *De Regimine Principum:* "If to provide itself with a King belongs to the right of any people, it is not unjust that the King set up by the people be destroyed or his power restricted if he tyrannically abuse this royal power. It must not be thought that such a people is acting unfaithfully in deposing the tyrant, even though it had previously subjected itself to him in perpetuity; because he himself has deserved that the covenant with his subjects should not be kept, since, in ruling the people, he did not act with that fidelity which the office of a King demands."[43] In this passage, then, St. Thomas unequivocally defends the right of the people to organized resistance and armed rebellion against tyranny or other unjust forms of government. But he adds the advice that the best way for a people to guard itself against such evils is to provide for a form of government which makes the rise of tyrants difficult, if not impossible, and to resort to revolution only after all legal and peaceful means have proved ineffective and only if there is a reasonable prospect that the use of force will produce more good than evil.

4) *The "Western Tradition."* In holding that the best form of government is one in which all the good features of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy are united; that there can be no good or legitimate government without some form of popular consent; and that the titles and rights of political authority as well as of political covenants are ultimately sanctioned and validated by the natural law and its Divine Author — in all these basic concepts of his political philosophy St. Thomas Aquinas is only the most prominent spokesman of a long line of distinguished theologians, moralists, and canonists, extending from the early Middle Ages to the age of Renaissance and Baroque (approximately from the ninth to the seventeenth century). We meet with an emphatic and at the same time more specific and systematic reaffirmation of the identical doctrines in the writings of the Italian Cardinal, Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621), and the Spanish theologian and philosopher, Francis Suárez (1548–1617), the two most prominent authors of the period of the great scholastic revival, both of them members of the Jesuit Order. In several

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[43] *De Reg. Princ.*, pp. 58 sq.

of their works they defended with vigorous arguments the *sovereign rights of the people* as expressed in the demand for government by the consent of the governed.[44] As against the theory of the "Divine Right of Kings" both writers maintained that political authority devolves from God directly on the entire community and is only indirectly, by popular choice, delegated to some individual ruler or some ruling group. They were unanimous in their contention that the people must be granted the right originally to possess the supreme sovereign power in themselves, and to choose freely some form of legislative representation, i.e., to vest their rights of self-government either in a Senate or in a constitutional monarch, or in a conjunction of both.

As regards the different forms of government: "A rule tempered by the monarchic, the aristocratic, and the democratic form of government is more useful than a simple monarchy," wrote Bellarmine. "If it were provided," he continued, "that all these rulers should obtain their position not by hereditary succession but that those who are best fitted should be selected from the body of the community . . . then the commonwealth would possess some of the attributes of a democracy." In such a government "the worth of a man rather than his lineage would be taken into consideration."[45]

This restatement of the principles of the sovereign rights of the people had become necessary in view of the exaggerated claims of King James I of England and of his son, Charles I. With the former, Bellarmine himself had entered into a rather heated controversy, and under the latter's tumultuous rule the British lawyer, Sir Edward Coke, appropriated Bellarmine's argumentation and expressly referred to the teachings of Henry de Bracton, an astute clerical jurist of the thirteenth century, in asserting that "the King is subject to God and the Law." Sir Edward Coke was the leader of the opposition and a co-framer of the "Petition of Right" in the ensuing conflict between King and Parliament. To the insistence of the Crown and the Lords on the principle of rulership by Divine Right he replied in a famous speech, in which he reminded the Eng-

[44] Cf. Robert Bellarmine, *Disputationes De Controversiis; De Laicis sive Saecularibus*, Eng. transl. (New York, 1928); Francisco Suárez, *De Legibus ac De Legislatore* (1891).

[45] Bellarmine, *Opera Omnia*, I, p. 467.

lish people of their medieval tradition of liberty, and which contained this pertinent passage: "If we grant this by implication, we give a 'sovereign power' above all laws. . . . That *power which is above the Law is not fit for the King to ask or the people to yield.*" And John Selden, another British jurist and coauthor of the "Petition of Right," wrote in the "Table Talk," the most famous of his works, concerning *the natural law as the source of all covenants and rights:* "I cannot fancy to myself what the Law of Nature means, but the Law of God. How should I know I ought not to steal, I ought not to commit adultery, unless somebody had told me so? It is not because I think I ought not to do these things, nor because you think I ought not; if so, our minds might change; whence then comes the restraint? From a higher power; nothing else can bind. I cannot bind myself, for I may untie myself again; nor an equal cannot bind me, for we may untie one another; it must be a superior, even God Almighty."

This entire body of political doctrine then, essentially in the form in which it had been handed down from the Middle Ages, was upheld in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, not only by the leading philosophers of the Catholic-scholastic tradition, but by a large number of eminent theologians, philosophers, lawyers, and political theorists, belonging to different schools of thought and belief, who in word and deed gave testimony of the vital continuity of this tradition. And this medieval heritage of political thinking lived on in the political philosophy of the English Whigs and Puritans, and through them found its way into the New World, where it was constitutionally incorporated in such momentous political documents as the *Virginia Declaration of Rights* and the American *Declaration of Independence.*

5) *"The Divine Right of Kings."* In the meantime, however, another theory of the State and of the origins of the titles of sovereignty had sprung up, a theory which may likewise be traced back to the early Middle Ages, but whose real roots can be discovered in the political concepts of ancient Oriental and Roman despotism. The new theory made its first medieval appearance in the eleventh century, finding support for its claims in certain concepts of Roman Law. In the course of the struggle between Empire and Papacy which

fills the pages of the dynastic history of the German Salians and Hohenstauffens, Emperors Henry IV (1056–1106), Frederick Barbarossa (1152–1190), and Frederick II (1212–1250) appealed repeatedly to Roman Law to justify their demands of Imperial supremacy in State and Church. And in Dante's *Monarchia* the Divine Right of the sovereign rulers of the "Universal Monarchy" is at least implicitly asserted — not in the odious sense, however, of the ruler being privileged to use his power as he pleases or of domineering over the Church.

This new trend of thought finally culminated in the political philosophy of Niccolo Machiavelli (1469–1527) and Jean Bodin (1520–1596), both of whom claimed for the State a supreme sovereign power, unrestrained by law. The ancient, pre-Christian ideas of statecraft were therewith revived, and with the assertion that the sovereign is *above* the law, the principle of the *absolute monarchy* was firmly established. The welfare of the State, vested in the sovereignty of the absolute prince, came to be regarded as an end in itself, the State absorbing in full or in part the functions of the Church, and holding sway over the bodies, minds, and souls of the citizens. This truly "totalitarian" idea of political sovereignty was subsequently accepted almost to the letter by Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) and John Austin (1790–1859), who in turn anticipated the absolutistic and totalitarian political philosophies of Hegel and Marx and their more recent fascist, national socialist, and communist disciples (Pareto, Rosenberg, Lenin, etc.).

The absolutistic concept of the State and its leader was the exact reverse of the dominant social and political ideas of the Middle Ages, when a vocational division of powers and functions had given the individual his share in social and political administration. The new absolutistic State, on the other hand, asserted its autonomy in refusing to share its power with any other agency or to recognize any law and sanction beyond and above itself, and therefore was as much opposed to a Universal Empire as to a Universal Church. The absolutistic idea of state omnipotence led logically to the paralyzation of parliamentary government, wherever it existed. As far as social divisions and class distinctions are concerned, they were as conspicuous in the age of absolutism as before, but they were

practically nullified by the fundamental and all-important distinction between the "sovereign ruler" and the "subject." The members of all social ranks were equally without rights and powers as against princely omnipotence. And in thus diminishing the intermediate steps of a graduated social order, the absolutistic State unknowingly prepared the way for the revolutionary ideas of social equality.

State and society were henceforth no longer conceived as organic structures, as they had been in the sociological and political speculation of Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas, but the State became a gigantic mechanism, reflecting in the political sphere the influence of the new mechanical and mathematical sciences. Reason and mechanical science joined in the construction of a well-ordered police state, in which nothing was to be left to chance, but everything was to be scientifically calculated and mechanically preconditioned, in accordance with the laws of induction, observation, comparison, and generalization.

6) *Church and State.* The attempt has been made to link some of the main aspects of this modern theory of the secularized absolutistic State with certain political and social doctrines of the Protestant Churches. Such a connection can, however, hardly be established in any generalized form. For while it is true that Protestantism made a successful endeavor to free the State from all subordination to ecclesiastical authority, it persisted in regarding the State as a divinely sanctioned institution and saw its aims and ends in the efficient protection of the material and moral interests of the Christian Commonwealth and its foundation, the natural and moral law. Thus the political theory of both Catholic and Protestant theology recognized the "Law of Nature" and its revealed embodiment in the Decalogue as the abiding norm of political and social life. Nevertheless, the Protestant insistence on the principle of state autonomy actually lent strong support to the absolutistic concepts of Machiavelli and Bodin.

By endowing civil officialdom with the character of a divinely ordained calling, the Protestant Churches further encouraged the State to extend its functions and activities to the fields of spiritual and moral education. Thus the State came eventually to regard itself as the sole organ of a civilization

which itself had become increasingly "autonomous," i.e., independent of religion and the Church.

Both Lutheranism and Calvinism assigned to the State certain cultural, educational, and spiritual tasks which formerly had belonged to the Church. But whereas Lutheranism felt more and more inclined to assume a quietistic and submissive attitude with regard to secular authorities and, with an implicit confidence in Divine Providence, showed itself willing to recognize the State's demands for unquestioning obedience, Calvinism reserved for the Church the right to reassert its spiritual and moral prerogatives whenever the State failed in or refused to live up to its educational tasks. If such a moral lapse on the part of the State were to happen, then the State would be left in the role of a mere guardian or a guarantor of public order and discipline, and a protector of property rights. In this way Lutheranism facilitated the rise of unrestricted princely absolutism while Calvinism inadvertently encouraged the development of *political and economic liberalism.*

Calvinism, in its dealings with actual political situations and with authoritarian forms of government — especially in its prolonged struggles with the Catholic rulers of France (Huguenots), the Netherlands, Scotland, and England — developed an attitude which was more aggressive than that of Lutheranism. It reaffirmed the right of resistance to "ungodly authorities" and even advocated tyrannicide. In the representative system of the Reformed Presbyterial Church-Order, Calvinism practised the principles of representative government, resuming and perpetuating the traditional theory of rulership by virtue of contractual agreement, sanctioned by God as its "remote cause" and here patterned after the ancient covenants of Israel. While in some ways implementing its political philosophy and administrative rule with traditional and at least partially democratic concepts, Calvinism was usually reluctant to acknowledge the rights of freedom of conscience. Among the Calvinist-Puritan States of North America freedom of conscience prevailed only in Rhode Island and Pennsylvania, and of these the former was largely settled by Baptists, the latter by Baptists and Quakers.

7) *Liberal Individualism.* A historical review of the major trends of political philosophy in the West up to the eighteenth

century impresses upon us the fact that the attainment of the ultimate end of the State, viz., the common good of all citizens, was increasingly threatened by the State's encroachment upon natural rights and individual liberties. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries witnessed a series of violent upheavals, growing out of the popular resentment against the autocratic States and rulers of Europe, and finally culminating in the French and American Revolutions. But while these revolutionary uprisings served to crush or check the exorbitant claims of the absolute monarchs, the commonweal soon found itself threatened by two other deviations from the *via media* of a political philosophy which in the past had successfully reconciled the rights and claims of both the individual and the State.

Out of the revolutionary movements of the eighteenth century arose the dual danger of an atomistic individualism, on the one hand, and an impersonal collectivism, on the other. While the tenets of atomistic individualism found expression in the political and economic liberalism of Adam Smith and David Ricardo, the theories of social collectivism were implicitly contained in the mechanist and materialist concepts of some of the French philosophers of the period of Enlightenment, which in part preceded and in part coincided with the Revolution of 1789 (Condillac, Lamettrie, D'Alembert, etc.).

The genuine Western tradition of political philosophy, and especially its teachings as to the nature of sovereignty, essentially in the form in which they had come down from antiquity and the Middle Ages, had found a haven and gained a new lease on life in the constitutions and commonwealths of the New World. In England this tradition had one of its stanchest supporters in John Locke (1632–1704), aside from the important aspect of all authority being derived from God. With such limitations, his *Second Treatise of Government* (1690) is one of the classics of Western political thought. Its basic political ideas are identical with those which inspired the American Revolution and are embodied in the Declaration of Independence and the American Constitution. Both Locke's First and Second Treatise were written to justify the English Revolution of 1688, and to refute once and for all the doctrine of the "Divine Right of Kings." His major arguments against these claims of the absolute monarchy Locke had already

presented in his "Essay Concerning Toleration" and in his "Letters on Toleration." Some of his ideas on religious toleration found practical application in the "Fundamental Constitutions for the Government of Carolina" (1669), in whose composition the philosopher himself had a considerable share. But Locke, it must be stated, was thoroughly anti-Catholic and opposed to the Church as well as to the sovereign. He wanted an excessive freedom. He failed to understand that with power once established by the people, the authority of the ruler is derived from God and calls for obedience, within its defined limits.

Locke teaches that civil society comes into being by means of a social contract whose terms provide for the surrender to the community of the natural right of personally enforcing the rule of reason, a right which, according to Locke, every man possessed in the original "state of nature." This natural right, contrary to the opinion held by Hobbes, is not considered by Locke as delegated to a sovereign ruler, but to the entire community. And this particular right is the only one which man is thus called upon to surrender, while all those other natural rights which limit the powers of the sovereign community, including the right to own property, and freedom of thought, speech, and worship, are retained by the individual. As far as property rights are concerned, Locke advocates a right of "absolute" ownership and with this important stipulation furnishes one of the mainstays of economic liberalism, deviating in this respect from the medieval theory of ownership, which on the whole had been accepted and reaffirmed by the religious reformers, and which had recognized only a "relative" right of ownership, subject to the superior term of the common good or public welfare. For Locke the owner was no longer a "steward" in the service of the commonweal, but the unconditional possessor of his property.

The political and economic liberalism and individualism as expounded by Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) and by David Ricardo in his *Principles of Political Economy* (1817), shared with the traditional political philosophy of the West the conviction that a nation or a State in the true sense cannot exist without a written or unwritten covenant or constitution that guarantees and protects human

rights, that all good government must be constitutional rather than autocratic. But these modern political theorists and their followers departed from the philosophical tenets of the past in that they made individual *self-interest* the source and basis of all moral, political, and economic values in State and society. Smith and Ricardo based their views on a supposed pre-established harmony which, they argued, permeated the cosmic as well as the social universe. The individual, therefore, who seeks his own advantage works at the same time for the well-being of all, and the progress of society as a whole is nothing but the sum total of the progress of the individuals of whom it is composed. Similarly, the French Physiocrats had asserted with François Quesnay, the court physician of Louis XV, that there existed a "natural order of things," to which all governments must conform and in which political and economic laws were as inexorably fixed as the laws of nature. It was therefore the main function of the State to remove all impediments which prevented "nature" from following its lawful course. According to this view, therefore, the best government was that which governed least. And as all governmental activities were thus regarded as necessary evils, it was further demanded that these activities should be purely coercive and restrictive, i.e., confined to the preservation of public order, the enforcement of contracts, and the punishment of crimes.

In France as well as in England these individualistic theories were the ideological counterpart of the political revolts against the autocratic regimes of Europe. In the United States the opposition to British rule combined with the rugged individualism of a pioneer people to make a policy of "laissez faire" acceptable to both the people and their government. In a land of almost unlimited opportunities the State could well afford to leave a maximum of free play to the political and economic initiative of the individual.

The natural and civil rights guaranteed by the liberal constitutional State, as conceived by the American Republic, included the freedom and inviolability of person and home, the protection of private property, freedom of speech, press, and assembly, freedom of worship, equality of opportunity, equality before the law, and the direct form of suffrage. The creation

of such a constitutional State, including the safeguards of the independent branches of executive, legislative, and judicial government, as originally demanded by Montesquieu and Locke, was in part at least the accomplishment of a more moderate form of political liberalism than the one advocated by Smith, Ricardo, and the Physiocrats. It had one of its greatest theoretical proponents in Immanuel Kant, for whom "political freedom" did not imply that everyone should be permitted to do whatever he pleases, but rather that everyone should be free to do anything that is "right," and that no power on earth should ever compel anyone to do what is "wrong." When Kant defined "legal freedom" as the right of the citizen to obey only laws to which he had given his free consent, he thereby confirmed the time-honored principle of "government by the consent of the governed."

When Kant and the other proponents of liberalism in the eighteenth century formulated their political creed, the term "liberal" had not yet become a political slogan and a household word of political parties. The word was first used in a partisan sense by the Spanish Cortes of 1812, to distinguish the defenders of constitutional government from the advocates of state absolutism. Kant, and with him most of the eighteenth-century liberals, still believed in absolute norms and values, although for them these norms were conceived as ingrained in the reason and the inborn moral sense of man, not derived from either a supernatural revelation or from the metaphysical constitution of reality and of the human being. They were, however, convinced that political and social structures were as "good" and as "bad" as the ideas on which they were built and which they practically manifested.

These ideological and partly rational, partly emotional bases of the older political liberalism were gradually undermined by the liberalist-utilitarian political philosophers and sociologists of the nineteenth century. While for Kant the purpose of the State had been the realization of the idea of "right," Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) regarded "the greatest good of the greatest number" as the end of all government and state legislation. Fully aware of the revolutionary implications of his teachings, he abandoned the ancient religious and meta-

physical norms relating to organized group life and substituted for the abstract demands of "right," "equity," and "justice" the sociological motives of *utility* and *expediency*.

The new constitutional State of liberalism and utilitarianism, however, could only hope to be safe from the recurrent waves of autocracy if it succeeded in filling the void that had been created by the abandonment of the religious and metaphysical bases of Western political philosophy. Thus liberalism eventually entered into an alliance with the forces of modern nationalism, intent upon transforming Europe into a continent of autonomous, constitutional States which individually and collectively would exert their power and influence for the promotion of the greatest happiness of the greatest number and for the preservation of peace.

That such hopes were doomed to end in disappointment and ultimate failure was due in part to the delusive utilitarian premise which had entertained the belief that human happiness could be advanced by an appeal to human selfishness, and in part to the erroneous view that liberty was the end of the individual and of society rather than merely a means to be used for the greater perfection of human persons and their association in States and societies.

By making unrestricted liberty for all the ultimate end of all social life, liberal individualism vitiated the principle of liberty itself, turning it into a principle of disguised anarchy, and assigning to the State the ignoble task of acting as the guardian of "laissez faire" and unlimited competition. By denying the State the right of interference to check the abuses of excessive liberty in the interest of the common good, the theory of liberal individualism frequently served as an excuse to sanction such abuses on the part of politically and economically powerful individuals, groups, and classes.

The failure of liberal individualism to grant to the State the right to exercise its proper functions as a moral agent in ordering relations between individuals and groups, in accordance with the principles of reason and justice, led in the end to the destruction of the very rights which individualism had set out to protect: breeding social disorder and anarchy, individualism, involved in a cumulative process of atomistic disintegration, became in many modern nations the prey of the

avenging reactionary forces of anti-individualist collectivism.

8) *Socialism and Communism.* The first collectivist menace to a happy equilibrium of individual and common good, as conceived by the traditional political philosophy of the West, came from "scientific" socialism. The philosophic basis of socialism was the anthropological materialism which had been developed by some of the more radical disciples of Hegel, the so-called "Young Hegelians," especially by Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–1872). For Hegel the State was the highest and most perfect manifestation of what he called the "World Spirit" or the Universal Reason. The State was morality, reason, and spirit incarnate: it was, in short, "God walking upon the earth," and therefore the dignity and worth of man was ultimately derived from the State.

His political theory made Hegel an ardent advocate of state omnipotence and a passionate opponent of liberal individualism. The essential features of his ideal "Kulturstaat" Hegel believed he recognized in the Prussian State, whose structure appeared to him equally suited for the realization of the political philosophies of both extreme nationalism and state socialism. Such a State was in no way any longer the servant of the law, but its infallible creator, interpreter, and master, leaving no room for what in former times had been termed the natural moral law. The most powerful State at any given historic epoch was entitled to regard itself as the incarnation of the World Spirit and to consider its own advantages as its supreme law. Thus Hegel's political philosophy was in its essence an elaborate attempt to justify metaphysically the political theories of Machiavelli: Might and force were identified with spirit and right, and the rebelling human conscience was soothed by shifting the responsibility for political crimes to the inexorable evolutionary laws of the World Spirit.

When Hegel died, his disciples were divided into the two opposing camps of the Christian-conservative "Old Hegelians" and the anti-Christian and materialist "Young Hegelians." This division in itself reflected the ambiguity of Hegel's system, which lent itself to diametrically contradictory conclusions. When, for example, Hegel coined the phrase: "everything that is real is rational," this formulation was eagerly seized upon by the conservatives to serve as an argument for the

existing social and political system. But the same phrase turned into the negative assertion: "everything that is not rational is not real" became a watchword of political and social radicalism and a call for revolutionary action, to make reality conform to the demands of reason.

The most astonishing and consequential fate, however, befell Hegel's system and method at the hands of Karl Marx (1813–1883), who claimed that Hegelian philosophy, which "had stood on its head," had been put by him on its legs again. Hegel's "dialectical idealism" became the methodical foundation for Marx's "dialectical materialism." While Hegel had tried to explain material reality by referring it back to ideas, Marx proposed to explain ideas as resulting from basic material realities. All social, political, cultural, and religious ideas were, according to Marx, conditioned by the modes of production, and the history of society was nothing but the history of civil wars between social classes, between the economically powerful and the economically weak, between the exploiters and the exploited, between "bourgeoisie" and "proletariat" — civil wars which culminated in the "industrial revolution" of the nineteenth century. And these struggles were declared to be the necessary processes of historico-social evolution and of the interaction of social forces, following strictly the laws of material biological evolution. By taking over Hegel's concept of the State and by filling this ready-made mold with a materialistic content, Marx developed "scientifically" his ideal pattern of a future classless society in which the "expropriation of the expropriators" would have been consummated.

Karl Marx and his friend and collaborator, Friedrich Engels (1820–1895), warmly welcomed the materialistic anthropologism of Ludwig Feuerbach, finding in it decisive support for their political and economic theories. Their trained historical sense traced the beginnings of modern materialism back to *medieval nominalism*. After having subjected the capitalist system of economy to a penetrating analysis, they presented their conclusions in programmatic form in the "Communist Manifesto" (1848), followed later on by the publication of Marx's "Das Kapital" (1867).

The *class struggle* was for Marx not an end in itself but merely a means to the elimination of classes and class privileges,

leading eventually to the abolition of national boundaries and the establishment of *a universal cooperative World State.* There was no doubt in his mind as to the inevitability of this immanent historical movement of the "dialectic" of economic forces toward the final goal. On the day when the means of production would be concentrated in the hands of a few capitalist and monopolist owners, capitalism would have dug its own grave, and a class-conscious international proletariat would stand ready to take over the system of industrial production and organize the redistribution of wealth with a view to the welfare of all.

Thus the socialistic theory of Marx and Engels described the ultimate realization of the ideal proletarian commonwealth as resulting from necessary processes of material evolution. While both writers admitted that the dictatorial assumption of political power by the workers and the armed repulsion of the forces of counterrevolution might become mandatory during the period of transition and readjustment, the violent overthrow of governments and of the established social and political order was incompatible with the doctrine of historical and dialectical materialism; it was never advocated directly by Marx and Engels themselves but rather by some of their more radical and less philosophical disciples and by the protagonists of syndicalism and anarchism in the later nineteenth and early twentieth century.

In the writings of Marx and Engels the terms *socialism* and *communism* are used almost synonymously. They were the labels attached to a political philosophy and economic theory which were opposed to the institution of private property, demanding the socialization of the means of production, and protesting against the enslavement of human beings by the misuse of the privileges of ownership. They were thus reactions against a liberal individualism which had made the State into a tool which could be used by a powerful ruling class for the suppression of the weaker groups and members of society.

Gradually, however, the term *communism* came to be generally understood as the most extreme form of Marxian socialism, denoting an increasing emphasis on the more violent aspects of the class struggle and the clamor for the dictator-

ship of the proletariat, including the demand for the complete socialization of the means of production; the communist revolution, as is well known, did not limit itself to the seizure of these. Both socialism and communism further fostered collectivism in that they subordinated the welfare of the individual to the thoroughly organized political and economic mechanisms of the Proletarian State, and by extending government control over family relations and education. The individual citizen was to become a kind of ward of the State, depending on the latter from the cradle to the grave, in his education, his opportunities, his occupation, his economic status, and by his means of sustenance. Economic and social forces were conceived as ends rather than as means, and thus man, the rational animal, was to be transformed into man, the economic animal. An eventual restoration of some of the liberties of the people was, however, expected from the complete communization of the economic order.

The ideas of the socialization or communization of property and of the common ownership of the soil were not entirely unfamiliar prior to the advent of the industrial age, either in the theoretical demands of political blueprints for the creation of an ideal State, such as Plato's *Republic,* or in the actual practice of communistically organized religious sects and monastic orders. But most of these communistic schemes of an earlier age were confined to relatively small circles or regions, or they were conceived and executed on a religious and voluntary basis, whereas Marxist socialism and communism called for a *compulsory* and *world-wide* system of socialization. It was to be brought about by a society which had first to be thoroughly secularized, and whose religious, philosophical, and sociopolitical outlook was to be determined by the unreserved adoption of the materialistic creed.

This common creed of the socialist masses found its first constitutional expression and organizational representation in the "First International" (London, 1864), whose statutes had been drawn up by Marx himself. After factional disputes had led to its dissolution in 1876, the "Second International" was founded in 1889. In 1907 a radical minority, advocating the instigation of civil wars, and headed by Lenin and Rosa Luxembourg, seceded from the more moderate majority.

World War I engendered further factional and regional divisions, and in 1919 the "Third International" (*Komintern*), following a strictly communist pattern, was established with Moscow as its center, carrying on its extensive international activities until 1943, when it was officially dissolved by the order of Joseph Stalin.

9) *Fascism and National Socialism.* The second collectivist threat to the ancient Western idea of "government by consent of the governed" came in our time in the form of the resurgence of *totalitarian autocracy,* coupled with *"racism"* and *imperialist nationalism.* It should be recognized that both fascism and national socialism, in making the State, or the race, or the "folk," or the blood *the absolute* end of social and political life, and in reducing everything else, including man himself, to a mere means, borrowed their ideology partly from the theoretical and practical patterns of past despotisms, partly from the political philosophy of Hobbes and Hegel, and from some of their contemporary disciples, such as Vilfredo Pareto (1848–1923) and Oswald Spengler (1880–1936). While, on the one hand, these political systems embody all the evils of *tyranny,* as diagnosed by Plato, Aristotle, and St. Thomas Aquinas, they share, on the other hand, with socialism and communism in a violent antagonism to the liberal-individualist ideas in politics and economics. The law of the group, the community, the nation, or the race completely outweighs the law and the right of the individual. And while liberal individualism regarded with the medieval and modern *nominalists* only the individual and particular as realities and declared the universal or the "social organism" a mere fiction, fascism and national socialism endow only the universal totality of the State with the predicate of reality and personality, and therefore of necessity deprive the individual citizen of his natural rights and his human dignity. These political philosophies thus substitute for the inorganic and atomistic, but "free," society of liberal individualism the gigantic mechanism of a uniform, but "servile," society, viz., the *Totalitarian State.*

As against the law of reason, fascism and national socialism advance the irrationalist rule of a *collective will and instinct* and the right of brute force. Divinizing purely biological urges, they consistently militate against the rule of both natural and

divine law: "If the human State is God, the supreme value and last end of human history and the cosmic process, God is at least implicitly denied. If God is the supreme value and last end . . . the State is His servant and the servant of His servants."[46]

Fascism, in the early days of its rule, dreamed of a higher synthesis of State and Church in the caesaropapism of the "Third Rome" (*Terza Roma*), just as national socialism dreamed of the resurrection of the "Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation" in the shape of the "Third Reich." In its political organization fascism was essentially the creation of *Benito Mussolini* and the creature of the *fascist party.* The centralized power of the State extended over every detail of local and communal administration. The political and economic activities, functions, and interests of capital and labor (including intellectual labor) were welded together in a system of vocational corporations, composed of two major sections of "functional or horizontal" units (industry, agriculture, trade and commerce, banking) and "organic or vertical" units (e.g., the "corporation of bread," extending from the farmer to the baker, etc.).[47] While theoretically these corporations, seven in number, were originally conceived by Benito Mussolini as semiautonomous bodies, subject to state control only if they failed in fulfilling their proper functions, in practice they soon became servile organs of the Totalitarian State.

National socialism, as implied in the name, catered to both the nationalist and socialist trends of the age. It endeavored to harness the conflicting interests of individuals, groups, and classes by their co-ordination in a racially purified "Volksstaat," attributing the defeat of Germany in 1918 and the ensuing impoverishment of the German people to a conspiracy of "international Jewry." The party program provided for the restoration of a prosperous middle class and a healthy peasantry. The iron rule of the "Totalstaat" extended to all departments of public life, culture, and education, and to the most intimate concerns and relations of private and family life. The authority of the Totalitarian State was anchored in the "leader

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[46] E. I. Watkin, *A Philosophy of Form* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1935), p. 204.
[47] Cf. A. Mussolini, *Il Fascismo e le corporazioni* (1931); B. Mussolini, article *Fascismo* in Encyclopedia Italiano, Vol. XIV, 1932.

principle" (*Führerprinzip*), all duties and responsibilities issuing from and converging in the supreme "Führer," the embodiment of "Volk" and "Reich."

The national-socialist "corporations" were described as "unions of performance" and included employers and employees; they were placed under the strictest control of party functionaries. Citizenship was limited to "Aryans," while special discriminatory laws (Nürnberg Laws) were enacted to eliminate all Jews from the political, economic, and cultural life of the national and racial community. In the official party program "positive Christianity" was endorsed, and freedom was promised to all religious creeds "as far as they do not endanger the State and are not in conflict with the moral ideas of the Germanic race," while at the same time a subtle but relentless war of extermination was consistently waged against Christian citizens, churches, and groups of all denominations, and official party leaders publicly declared Germanism and Christianity as mutually exclusive.[48]

Like fascism, national socialism glorified war and conquest as necessary and normal outlets for a nation's strength and will to power, as normal manifestations of national health and vigor, and as legitimate means to prosperity and national aggrandizement.

10) *The Corporate State.* To protect the common good from the dangers of liberal individualism, on the one hand, and of collectivist totalitarianism, on the other, and to restore the true sovereignty of the State within the limits of the natural and moral law, the attempt was made in our time to work out a theory of the State in which the conflicting interests of individuals, classes, and groups are harmonized in a higher synthesis. This theory of "solidarism," as advanced by a number of contemporary moral theologians, political scientists, and sociologists, has found its strongest support in the principles of the "eternal philosophy" and their attempted realization in the corporative society of the Middle Ages. The demands for a reconstruction of the political and social order on the bases of metaphysical and moral principles, within

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[48] Cf. Alfred Rosenberg, *Der Mythos des XX. Jahrhunderts;* Hermann Rauschning, *The Revolution of Nihilism* (New York: 1940); *The Voice of Destruction* (New York: 1939).

the framework of the complex industrial society of our time were carefully analyzed and summarized in official pronouncements of the Holy See in Rome and the Catholic Hierarchy in many lands, but especially in some of the Encyclical Letters of Leo XIII and Pius XI.[49] Without trying to resuscitate a defunct and historically delimited political and social system, the two Pontiffs pointed to certain abiding truths embodied in the political and social philosophy of the past and called for their adaptation to present needs, in order to effect a cure of the ills that beset modern society.

While these Papal documents vivify and fortify their argumentation by frequent references to Scripture and Tradition, they appeal directly to those norms of the physical and moral law which are deeply ingrained in the universe and in human reason (cf. pp. 148 sq.). These Encyclical Letters and their recommendations therefore are not addressed to Catholics and other Christians only, but to the entire human race, calling upon all men of good will to come to the rescue of the common intellectual heritage of mankind and thus to humanize and personalize the individual and society.

Dealing with moral and social phenomena only in terms of factual description and historic retrospection, contemporary positivist sociology and political science necessarily are more concerned with means than with ends. The problem of *social reconstruction,* however, is definitely one of *ends* or, as the scholastic philosopher would say, of *final causes* (cf. pp. 66 sq.). In other words, it is a problem that can only be solved by inquiring into the purpose of State and society and into the nature of man as the focal unit around which the social structure is built and from which it derives its meaning. If the "eternal philosophy" is correct in regarding the universe as an organic totality ordered and proportioned to the organic totality of human nature, and if the wholeness of both has a common ground and final end in God as the First and Final Cause, then State and society, too, are not chance aggregations of individuals or arbitrary constructions but likewise organic structures which must be integrated in the graduated metaphysical and moral order of reality. If this philo-

[49] Cf. Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum* (1891) *and Immortale Dei* (1885); Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931) and *Divini Redemptoris* (1937).

sophical premise is accepted, then the functions and the end of the State are circumscribed by the natural and moral law and must be in strict harmony with it. All the activities of the State must converge in the pursuit and promotion of the "common good," comprising the spiritual, intellectual, moral, physical, and economic goods of individuals, i.e., the goods of mind and body of concrete human beings. This "common good" can only be realized if all these individual goods are so equitably spread or distributed that they are placed within the reach of each and every citizen, so that, by availing themselves of these proffered opportunities, they may through their own efforts and services work for their personal perfection as well as for the common welfare of all.

Endeavoring to achieve a synthesis of what is acceptable in liberalist individualism and impersonalist collectivism, and as far as it is acceptable, the philosophy of "solidarism" necessarily makes use of the partial truths and the positive moral incentives embodied in the two extreme political theories which it proposes to harmonize. It acknowledges and respects both the individual and social propensities of human nature, encouraging and protecting a tempered and ordered self-love, personal initiative and ambition, but stressing simultaneously the social virtues of group loyalty in family relations as well as in the communal, national, and international spheres. It thus neutralizes the conflicting interests of individuals and groups, directing their energies and services into the channels of a "common good" which as such satisfies and fulfills the legitimate individual and social aspirations of human nature.

It should be understood that the political philosophy underlying the "solidarist" concept of society enunciates certain principles of organized group living which are compatible with different systems of government and make allowance for different practical applications. These principles are essentially *in*compatible only with the two extreme positions whose inherent deficiencies they try to overcome, viz., unrestrained individualism and collectivist totalitarianism. "Solidarism" or the philosophy of the *Corporate State* is unalterably opposed to the social and political concepts of both because both represent a perversion of the social order, growing out of a misinterpretation of human nature.

The political philosophy of the Corporate State places great emphasis on the creation of "occupational" or "vocational" groups in which the functions and interests of employers and employees are to be socialized for the sake of the solidaric interests of the community. These vocational groups are to function as *autonomous performance and area societies* in which men practising the same trade or profession are joined together "not according to the position they occupy in the labor market but according to the diverse functions which they exercise in society."[50] Membership in these groups is to be "compulsory" only in the sense in which citizenship may be called compulsory, i.e., every member of a vocational group, as long as he chooses to be a member, is bound to observe the rules laid down by a particular trade or profession.[51] The State, relieved from functions and duties with which it is encumbered in highly individualist and collectivist societies, will be free once more to rule "in kingly fashion above all party contention, intent only on justice and the common good."[52] The restoration of social groups of performance, representing the common interests of different occupations and regions, will thus encourage the creation of a system of *vocational and regional pluralism,* in which the autonomous groups, endowed with the status and dignity of legal persons, will contribute to the increasing *personalization* of social relations, and in which the principle of unlimited competition will give way to the principle of *voluntary cooperation.*

The more the ideals of *social justice* are realized by the concerted efforts of autonomous social groups, the less the State will be called upon to interfere on behalf of special groups or classes. "It is indeed true," writes Pius XI, "that, owing to the change in social conditions, much that was formerly done by small bodies can nowadays be accomplished only by large corporations. None the less, just as it is wrong to withdraw from the individual and commit to the community at large what private enterprise and industry can accomplish, so, too, it is an injustice, a grave evil, and a disturbance of the right order for a larger and higher corporation to arrogate to itself

[50] Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno.*

[51] The economic aspects of the Corporate State are discussed in the following chapter.

[52] Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno.*

functions which can be performed efficiently by smaller and lower bodies. . . . The State should leave to these smaller groups the settlement of issues of minor importance. . . . Let those in power, therefore, be convinced that the more faithfully this principle be followed, and a graded hierarchical order exist between the various subsidiary organizations, the more excellent will be both the authority and the efficiency of the social organization as a whole and the happier and more prosperous the condition of the State."[53]

A superficial perusal of the literature dealing with the proposed structure of the Corporate State might convey the impression that there exists a more than accidental parallelism between the fascist corporations and the national-socialist "groups of performance" (*Leistungsgemeinschaften*), on the one hand, and the solidarist "vocational groups," on the other. However, a more careful analysis reveals the essential difference between the political philosophies underlying the two theories. The philosophy of "solidarism" has its frame of reference in the spiritual and physical nature of man, and its term in the perfection of human personality, in its triple aspect of rationality, personality, and sociability. It is based on the principle of *free service and voluntary association,* and it recognizes *the sanctions of the Divine, natural, and moral law* as the regulative norms of individual and social functions and activities. Fascist and national-socialist "corporatism," on the other hand, has its frame of reference in the Absolute State or the absolutized people or race, denying autonomy to individuals and groups, and imposing an external corporative discipline from above, by means of physical coercion and regimentation. In fascism and national socialism the supremacy of the Divine, natural, and moral law is implicitly or explicitly denied, the Totalitarian State claiming to be the sole originator and exclusive dispenser of all law. Thus the regimented "corporative groups" and the individuals pressed into their service become the depersonalized organs of an omnipotent State.

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[53] Pius XI, *op. cit.*

§ 24. The Commonwealth of Nations

INCLUDED among the natural rights of man, the rational and social animal, is, as we know (cf. p. 146), the right to form such associations as answer to his individual and social needs and to aid him in his striving for personal perfection, enabling him to realize those common ends of human nature which, if he were left to his isolated individual efforts, would be beyond his reach. Among these associations are the family, the vocational and professional groups, and those larger social units which are designated as nations and States.

We have pointed out that all these associations have their common term or end in the "common good" and that their functions and activities are subject to the sanctions of that natural and moral law which is revealed to and discovered by man in the metaphysical constitution of the created universe and in the physico-spiritual structure of his own self. But if the common good in conformity with the natural and moral law is the end of any particular State or nation, then the conclusion is inevitable that "humanity" as such or the society of States must have the same end and be subject to the same law. Thus the concepts of international relations or the principles of *International Law* grow out of the very nature of the State. And just as we distinguish in the sphere of the individual State between the precepts of natural and positive or human law (cf. p. 153), so also in the sphere of international relations we distinguish between the precepts of *natural international law* and the *positive* legal enactments or agreements which govern international relations and which ought to represent the practical interpretations and applications of the general principles of the natural and moral law. International law thus becomes part of the natural and moral law and is subject to the same moral norms and standards which govern the life of the individual, the family, the social group, and the State.

While in primitive human society it was usually possible for the smaller units of the patriarchally organized clan or tribe to procure for individuals and groups many of those material and moral advantages which are essential for the

well-being of the individual members, the complex structures of highly civilized nations seem to call for an ever increasing amount of collaboration and the co-ordination of the needs and wants of large national units. And just as the transition from clanship to larger group associations and to statehood requires a curb on excessive individualism for the sake of the common good, so the transition from a state of national isolation to the order of a *commonwealth of nations* requires the surrender of some amount of individual state sovereignty in the interest of the *international common good*. As the common good of individual States is jeopardized by individual license as well as by latent or open conditions of civil strife — conditions resulting from the attempt of individuals and groups to prosper at the expense of their fellow compatriots — so the end of the international common good is thwarted by the attempt of individual States to increase their power and their wealth by preying upon their fellow nations.

It is obvious, moreover, that man, being destined to live in community with others of his kind, cannot attain even to his own personal perfection in isolation, but only in the vital give-and-take of social relationships. In other words, man's moral efforts must be directed not only toward his own individual good but toward the common social good of his fellow men, and all individual moral efforts should thus converge in the growing realization of the common good of "humanity" or the human race as such. Sharing in the same human nature, and being destined for the same final end, all individual human beings are united by a common bond which establishes among them a universal brotherhood. And, as by virtue of their equal and common dependence on the First and Final Cause of the created universe all men are also filially united under the fatherhood of God, the nature of their unity is at once physical, moral, and spiritual.

This unity of the human race, however, is as yet only a virtual, not an actual one. It can only become actual by man's loyal observance of the two supreme injunctions of the moral law, as expressed in the Decalogue, viz., to love God above all things and to love his neighbor as he loves his own self. In accordance with what we have stated above, it is evident that this dual commandment applies unconditionally to indi-

viduals, families, groups, and nations, inasmuch as nations, States, and societies do not exist apart from the individuals of whom they are composed.

The only kind of unity which has become an actuality in the present age is of a *physical* or geographical nature. Although there is a growing awareness of the mutual interdependence of the different parts of the modern world, of peoples and races, in the various fields of political, economic, scientific, and cultural endeavor, there is as yet no proportionate consciousness of the *moral unity and solidarity* of the human race.

The two main obstacles which stand in the way of true human solidarity and thus impede the pacification of international relations are again two extreme and exclusive tenets of political philosophy, from whose harmonization alone the establishment of a rule of international justice and peace could result. These antagonistic political creeds are *excessive nationalism,* on the one hand, and *abstract internationalism,* on the other. The former roughly corresponds to the philosophy of liberal individualism, transposed to the international scene, while the latter applies the collectivist pattern of thinking to the field of international relations, depriving persons as well as nations of the prerogatives of their individuality.

Extreme nationalism, finding ideological support in the political philosophy of Machiavelli, Bodin, Hobbes, Hegel, and their contemporary disciples, preaches national isolation, self-love, and aggrandizement at the expense of other nations and thus makes the *power motive* the end of a nation's foreign policy. The moral law and the rules of justice are then either held in cynical disregard or their validity is arbitrarily confined to the national boundaries of a particular State. Excessive nationalism manifests itself accordingly either as *moral nihilism* or as *national isolationism.* Though claiming for itself the title of "political realism," this political philosophy is most unrealistic in that it takes into account only the limited physical or zoological aspects of reality and neglects or tries to rule out of existence the moral and spiritual components of man and society. Its fundamental convictions are summarily expressed by one of its contemporary adherents in the following words: "The statesman who conducts foreign policy can concern himself with values of justice, fairness, and tolerance

only to the extent that they contribute to or do not interfere with the power objective. They can be used instrumentally as moral justification for the power quest, but they must be discarded the moment their application brings weakness. The search for power is not made for the achievement of moral values; moral values are used to facilitate the attainment of power."[54]

Abstract internationalism, on the other hand, is equally unrealistic in that it strips both the concrete individual and the concrete national society of their natural, physical, and moral characteristics, in order that they may be fitted into the ideal and abstract pattern of a world-wide *collective uniformity.* Internationalism thus becomes unmindful of the personal destiny of man and neglectful of the significant part which the natural and moral associations of family, social group, and national State play in the realization of that destiny.

The healthy organization of social life on a national and international scale will have to refrain from the two extremes of national egotism and international collectivism, while at the same time realistically acknowledging the kernel of truth contained in both positions. Against excessive nationalism it is necessary to insist that *the moral law knows of no national and racial boundaries* but is unconditional and universal in its validity and application. And against abstract internationalism it must be asserted that States and nations as natural associations of human persons acquire a dignity of their own and, as interpreters and administrators of the natural and moral law, command the respect and obedience of the individual citizens.

By rejecting both these extremes a well-balanced social philosophy will moreover be able to save from perversion or extinction the virtue of *patriotism.* The love of one's natural earthly home and of those who share with us in the same natural and spiritual heritage of blood, soil, race, and cultural tradition is an extension of legitimate self-love and as such in accordance with the natural law. But the true patriot will not therefore make an idol of his own nation and exclude from his love and benevolence all other nations. Nor will he

[54] Nicholas John Spykman, *America's Strategy in World Politics* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1942), pp. 18 sq.

have to pin his faith on the opposite fallacy, viz., renounce his personal and national individuality and pledge his exclusive allegiance to the abstract idea of "humanity." The true patriot, in other words, is a good individual, a good family man, a good citizen of his country, and a good citizen of the world. If a man pursues his own personal good at the expense of his fellow men, he stunts and debases himself as a moral personality. Similarly, if a man makes the good of his own nation an end in itself and the ultimate aim of his loyalties, disregarding the moral interrelation existing between all members of the human race, he thereby stunts and distorts both the idea and the reality of his own nation. He harms his own nation by pursuing its own particular good at the expense of the common good of all nations. The natural moral law permits neither an individual nor a nation to strive for ends which are incompatible with or detrimental to the common good. Both individuals and nations are good only in so far as they conform to and participate in the Supreme and Absolute Good. Such conformity, however, implies that the individual respects the integrity and sovereign rights of other nations.

The principles which ought to govern and regulate international relations are derived from the basic metaphysical and moral concepts of the "realistic philosophy." They are embodied in the traditional political philosophy of the West as expounded by Aristotle, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, Vitoria, Suárez, Hugo Grotius, and many other theorists of International Law. All these writers are agreed that the rights and obligations of States with regard to each other are to be defined and delimited in accordance with the natural law and that the rules of the natural law apply equally to individuals, groups, and States. We find a strong reaffirmation of these traditional teachings as well as directives for their adaptation to the contemporary conditions of international life in several *Papal Encyclicals* of recent date and in other official pronouncements of the Vatican dealing with the reconstruction of international society on the bases of justice and equity.[55]

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[55] Cf. *Principles for Peace. Selections from Papal Documents.* Edited for the Bishops' Committee on the Pope's Peace Points by the Rev. Harry C. Koenig, S.T.D. Preface by the Most Rev. Samuel A. Stritch, Archbishop of Chicago. National

Enjoining upon the nations the necessity of the rule of justice in international affairs, Pius XI writes: "It is never lawful or expedient to separate what is useful from what is right. . . . Advantages gained for the family, the State, or public power to the detriment of others may seem great and magnificent achievements, but St. Augustine shows us that they are not lasting and always carry with them fear of disaster: they are a bright joy as brittle as glass, accompanied by the haunting fear of a sudden break."[56] As peace, according to St. Augustine, is "the tranquillity of order," there can be no peace in human relations without order, "and so, likewise," says Pius XII, "if justice be done away with, there can be no such thing as order." Justice, however, "requires that all men acknowledge and defend the sacred rights of human freedom and human dignity. . . . It is part of the office of justice to determine and to maintain the norm of that order in human affairs which is the primary and the principal foundation of lasting peace."[57]

But to the demands of strict and rigid *justice* the Pontiff adds the obligations of *charity*.[58] As all men are members of the same human family and are thus brothers under the fatherhood of God, and as all States are composed of human persons destined for the same end, the laws of charity and benevolence apply to international relations as much as to relations between the individual members of a national or tribal society.

As the demands of justice and charity in domestic and international affairs derive their titles from the natural and Divine law, Pius XII sees the fountainhead of the disunity of nations and peoples in the abandonment of the universal standard of morality: "Both in private life and in the State itself, and moreover in the mutual relations of race with race, of country with country, the one universal standard of morality is set aside; by which we mean *the natural law*. . . . This law reposes, as upon its foundation, on the idea of God, the almighty

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Catholic Welfare Conference (Washington, D. C., 1943). Distributors: The Bruce Publishing Co., Milwaukee, Wis. Cf. in particular: Benedict XV, *Ad Beatissimi* (1914); "Proposals for Peace" (1917); *Pacem Dei* (1920); Pius XI, *Ubi Arcano Dei* (1922); *Mit brennender Sorge* (1937); Pius XII, "Easter Sermon on Peace" (1939); *Summi Pontificatus* (1939); "The Five-Point Peace Plan" (1939); "Letter to President Roosevelt" (1940).

[56] Pius XI, *Ubi Arcano Dei.*

[57] Pius XII, "Easter Sermon."

[58] Cf. Pius XII, *op. cit.*

Creator and Father of us all, the supreme and perfect lawgiver." Thus "the difference between right and wrong becomes more and more faint until it completely dies away."[59]

International treaties and agreements are natural ingredients and statutory implements of International Law. But the validity of such treaties, too, rests on the law of nature, without which they would have no binding force and might be regarded as mere scraps of paper. If it is maintained that the validity of treaties depends merely on other treaties, previously concluded, the implication is once more that the rights and obligations which are defined in these treaties have their source in the absolute and arbitrary power of the State. If, however, the binding force of treaties rests on the natural law, then, obviously, all treaties which violate the precepts of the natural law are unjust and invalid. A treaty, for example, which has been entered into by one of the contracting parties under duress or the threat of force cannot be regarded as binding if its terms offend against the laws of international justice. Or, "in the course of time new situations may arise, which were not foreseen and perhaps could not be foreseen at the time when the pact was made. In that case, either the whole agreement or some part of it may have become . . . unjust to one of the contracting parties. . . . In such a case, the obvious expedient is to take refuge as soon as possible in a full and frank discussion of the difficulty, so that the old pact can be suitably altered, or a new pact substituted for it. It is, however, quite a different thing to regard all signed pacts as written in water, assuming to oneself the tacit right of breaking them at one's own discretion, whenever self-interest demands it. . . . Such behavior . . . is utterly subversive of the natural order."[60] "But even the best and most detailed regulations will be imperfect and foredoomed to failure unless the peoples and those who govern them submit willingly to the influence of that spirit which alone can give life, authority, and binding force to the dead letter of international agreements. They must develop that sense of deep and keen responsibility which measures and weighs human statutes according to the sacred and inviolable standards of the law of God; they must cultivate

[59] Pius XII, *Summi Pontificatus.*
[60] Pius XII, *op. cit.*

that hunger and thirst after justice which is proclaimed as a beatitude in the Sermon on the Mount and which supposes as its natural foundation the moral virtue of *justice.*"[61]

This series of quotations from Papal documents may fittingly be concluded by a reference to a pertinent passage in Pius XI's stirring appeal to the German hierarchy and the German people, composed in the German language in 1937: "Man as a person," the Pontiff wrote in this message, "possesses rights he holds from God, and which any collectivity must protect against denial, suppression, or neglect. To overlook this truth is to forget that the real common good ultimately takes its measure from man's nature, which balances personal rights and social obligations, and from the purpose of society, established for the benefit of human nature. Society was intended by the Creator for the full development of individual possibilities, and for the social benefits, which by a give-and-take process everyone can claim for his own sake and that of others. Higher and more general values, which collectivity alone can provide, also derive from the Creator, for the good of man, for his full development, natural and supernatural, and thus for the realization of his perfection. To neglect this order is to shake the pillars on which society rests, and to compromise social tranquillity, security, and existence."[62]

If we ask for the best possible and most effective means to transform gradually the virtual metaphysical and moral unity of nations into an actual one, we are forced to the conclusion that this goal can only be approached by the collaboration of all nations in accordance with the rules of justice and reason, i.e., in obedience to the natural and moral law. Such collaboration, however, calls for the creation of institutions which implement the mutual rights and obligations of States and bind all nations juridically to a commonly accepted covenant of justice, administered by a *supernational and impartial tribunal.* While from the demands of the *natural* law we are able to infer the necessity for the international organization of mankind to realize the common ends of the race or the international common good, it is within the province of *positive* international law to devise the executive, judicial, and legislative institu-

[61] Pius XII, "The Five Point Peace Plan," V.
[62] Pius XI, *Mit brennender Sorge.*

tions which are to provide the proper means for the attainment of the desired end.

In the past the supernational ideas embodied in the ancient Roman Empire (*Pax Romana*), in the federative association of Europe in the form of the "Holy Roman Empire," in the multilateral obligations assumed by the Congress of Vienna (1814) and the "Holy Alliance" (1815), and, more recently, in the organization of the "League of Nations" (1920) and the affiliated "World Court" of The Hague (1920), expressed more or less imperfectly the desire of the peoples and their leaders to set up a system of *collective security,* to promote and safeguard a rule of international justice and peace. The initiative for the International Peace Conferences of The Hague (1899, 1907), which preceded the establishment of the "Permanent World Court," originated with Pope Leo XIII, while his successors, especially Benedict XV, Pius XI, and Pius XII, were among the most ardent advocates of a system of collective security administered by a League of Nations vested with the authority to uphold international justice and pledged to defend the principles of international morality.

The lamentable weakness and the partial failure of the efforts of the ill-fated "League of Nations" was in part due to the fact that it lacked the necessary power to back up its decisions by means of effective sanctions and, if necessary, by force of arms. It would seem, therefore, that a resurrected "League" and "World Court," entrusted with the tasks of conciliation, arbitration, and legislation in the international field, must have at their disposal an *international armed force,* so that, if need be, coercion may aid in the dispensation of justice. "It is important," writes Pius XII, "to bear in mind the experience gained from the ineffectiveness or imperfections of previous institutions."[63] The peace proposals of Benedict XV of the year 1917 had called for a system of supernational arbitration, implemented "with sanctions to be settled against any State that should refuse to submit international questions to a court of arbitration or to accept its decisions."[64] And in 1920 the same Pontiff had urged "that all States, putting aside mutual suspicion, unite in one league, or rather a sort

[63] Pius XII, "The Five Point Peace Plan," III.
[64] Benedict XV, "Peace Proposals" (1917).

of family of peoples, designed both to maintain their own independence and safeguard the order of human society."[65]

§ 25. War and the Moral Law

AS LONG as there exists no generally recognized supernational tribunal, vested with authority to settle disputes by arbitration and legal decisions and equipped with sufficient power to prevent unjust aggression and punish the unjust aggressor, the resort to war as a means of the restoration of justice and the preservation of the moral order can be morally justified. The natural law, while condemning the intentional destruction of human lives, permits legitimate acts of self-defense, whether of individuals, groups, or States, even if such acts result in the killing of an aggressor. The moral character of an act is determined by its object or end, and all the means proportionate to that end are legitimate as long as they do not violate the natural and moral law. As the direct object of self-defense is not the killing of the aggressor but the stopping of the aggression, as a means of self-preservation, the death of the aggressor is not directly willed but results indirectly or accidentally.

A *defensive war,* according to a similar line of reasoning, is a means to secure as its end the restoration of justice and the preservation of the moral order, and may as such not only be permissible but even necessary. However, reason, common sense, and the obligations of charity demand that even a defensive war should be waged only as a last means or a final resort, i.e., after all peaceful means of settlement have been exhausted.

As to *wars of aggression* or *offensive wars,* they are condemned by natural and moral law if they are engaged in without provocation and if their object is the violation or destruction of a foreign State for the sake of conquest, national aggrandizement, or the increase of national opportunities and resources. Such wars are essentially unjust and cannot be condoned on any moral grounds.

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[65] Benedict XV, *Pacem Dei.*

It is, however, conceivable that an aggressive war be undertaken to right certain wrongs, to remedy certain injustices, to gain freedom from political or economic oppression, or to serve in some other way the ultimate ends of justice and the moral order. If, in thus pursuing a morally justifiable end, and in the absence of an international law court, the victimized State resorts to the force of arms, even an aggressive war may be defensible on moral grounds. Similarly, and for identical reasons, a *war of intervention,* by which one State comes to the aid of another State or aids another people in their struggle against unjust or tyrannical rule, may be morally justified. For just as the individual has the right, and at times also the obligation, to protect one or several of his fellow men from unjust treatment or from violence, so likewise a State has in special circumstances the duty to intervene in behalf of another State, so that justice may prevail and injustice be curbed.

Such are the general requisites of a *just war,* according to the well-nigh unanimous teaching of the leading representatives of the "realistic philosophy," but in particular of St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, Vitoria, Bellarmine, and Suárez. To the question whether it is not a counsel of moral perfection to suffer injury and thus silently condone injustice rather than to seek redress by violent resistance, St. Thomas Aquinas answers: "The pardon of injuries one has suffered oneself is an act of perfection if to do so is useful to others; but *to tolerate patiently injuries suffered by others is an act of imperfection and even a vice* if it is possible to resist the aggressor."[66] In other words, while the individual may rise to greater moral perfection by not resisting evil and, in extreme cases, by suffering martyrdom, this attitude cannot morally be defended if as a consequence the welfare of others and the commonweal are imperiled. It is imperative for the common interests vested in the State that all appropriate measures be taken to defend the rights of the entire community against unjust aggression, and the individual is bound in justice and charity to aid his fellow men and the State in the defense of their natural rights. *Peace* is certainly one of the greatest goods and an end worthy of the noblest human efforts, but without the even higher good of *justice,* peace can exist in name only:

[66] *Summa Theologica,* II–II, q. 188, a. 3, ad. 1.

it would then be a good that lacks its due perfection and to that extent would be an evil (cf. p. 39).

St. Thomas Aquinas further demarcates the moral requisites of a *just war* by listing specifically the following *three conditions:* (1) war must be declared by the supreme *legitimate authority* of the State; (2) war must only be waged for a *just and grave cause;* (3) war must be carried out with the *right intention* or the right object in view.[67] To these stipulations *Suárez* and *Bellarmine* add as a *fourth demand* that war "must be conducted in the *right way.*"[68]

The meaning of the *first* of these conditions is fairly obvious: it was originally devised for an age in which many small potentates, princes, and nobles as well as townships and provinces resorted to self-help or "club law" (*Faustrecht*), especially in times when the legally constituted authority of the State was greatly weakened and the processes of civil law relatively undeveloped. In the absence of a supernational court of arbitration it rests with the lawful authority of the supreme ruler of the State to seek justice by peaceful means and, these failing, by force of arms.

The requirement of a "just and grave cause" implies that essential rights are jeopardized by unjust aggression (defensive war); or that flagrant injustices are to be remedied, retribution exacted, and peace or "the tranquillity of order" restored (offensive war); or, finally, that armed aid is given to an unjustly attacked nation (war of intervention). A "just cause" for war cannot exist unless a "moral guilt" has been established beyond any reasonable doubt. But whereas St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas held that a just war could only be waged if the sole moral guilt rested on the opponent's side, Suárez taught that a just war might be waged even if a great deal of right was on the side of the opponent, if only more right and justice were found on one's own side.[69] But Suárez remarks elsewhere that in case of doubt no action should be taken, since to declare war equals the passing of a death sentence, and to pass such a sentence with a doubting

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[67] Cf. *Summa Theologica,* II–II, q. 40, a. 1.

[68] Cf. Bellarmine, *De Controv. Christ. Fidei,* II, lib. II, *de Laicis,* cap. XV.; and Suárez, *De Bello.*

[69] Cf. Suárez, *De bello,* 7.

conscience constitutes a most severe violation of the Divine, natural, and human law.[70]

The definition of what constitutes a "just cause" is naturally of the greatest importance in connection with the crucial question of fixing the responsibility for the outbreak of an armed conflict. In the past and to some extent even in the present this question of establishing the "war guilt" has presented almost insurmountable difficulties, simply because in most cases the victorious nation or nations were at once belligerents and judges. The establishment of a *supernational tribunal,* entrusted with powers to arbitrate international conflicts, would, however, greatly simplify the problem. A State which obstinately refused to submit its grievances to the due processes of law and arbitration and resorted to the force of arms instead, would immediately prejudice its own cause and saddle itself with the fearful responsibility which the waging of an unjust war entails. Nor can this responsibility be shirked by the claim of waging a "preventive war," i.e., a war to steal a march on a potential aggressor. The slogan of "preventive warfare" has always served unjust aggressors as a subterfuge and handy excuse for international brigandage.

Finally, the cause for engaging in war should not only be just and grave but also proportionate to the goods to be attained and to the evils that are the inevitable concomitant and sequel of every war: "A war is not just," writes Vitoria, "if it is evident that it will do the State more harm than good, even if there be a 'just cause.' For the State has only the right to declare war to protect itself and to defend itself and its possessions. If then a war is liable to result in the weakening of the State, it is unjust."[71] It seems, however, that this latter stipulation can hardly be accepted without reservation. For situations may arise in which spiritual and moral values must be defended, even against great odds and at the risk of possible defeat. The fortunes of war are unpredictable, and often the heroism of a people fighting for its existence and its human rights has turned almost certain defeat into victory.

With regard to the third requisite of a just war, the "right intention," St. Thomas Aquinas offers the following comment:

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[70] Cf. Suárez, *Schol. Com.* II–II, q. 40, a. 1, dub. 5.
[71] Vitoria, *De Potestate Civili, cap.* 13.

"The intention must be to promote the good and to avoid evil. For, as Augustine says: 'With the true servants of God even wars serve the cause of Peace, as they are not motivated by greed and cruelty but by the desire for Peace, so that the wicked may be restrained and the good protected.' It may therefore happen that a war, though declared by lawful authority and waged for a just cause, may nevertheless be unjustifiable because of the wrong intention of those who engage in it. For what Augustine rightly blames in war is the desire to harm, the cruelty of revenge, a warlike and vindictive spirit, the lust of power and such-like motives."[72]

As to the *"right way* of conducting a war," insisted upon by Suárez and Bellarmine, a set of rules was gradually worked out in the course of the centuries of the Christian era and has been subscribed to by most civilized nations of the modern world. These rules derive from the general precepts of the natural law and have been codified by *positive international law* in the form of treaties and covenants. Thus, for example, the international standards of warfare adopted by the powers represented at the "Geneva Convention" (1864) and at the Peace Conferences of The Hague, deal in particular with the moral limitations of the rights of belligerents, with the treatment to be accorded to prisoners of war, and with the distinctions to be made between combatants and noncombatants. While some of these rules have been quite generally adhered to, others have been violated by individual nations under the strain and stress of battle or owing to the rapidly changing conditions of modern warfare, the invention of new weapons, and especially the new methods of aerial combat. "Total war," which transforms the entire territories engulfed in the conflict into vast arsenals of war industry, and in which the entire civilian population is actively engaged in the prosecution of the war, if not in actual combat, has largely done away in the actual conduct of war with the formal distinction between combatants and noncombatants. Air attacks on munition centers, railway yards and junctions, industrial plants and supply centers, etc., involve the destruction of many civilians who were formerly protected by the rule that "innocent" lives must be

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[72] *Summa Theologica,* II–II, q. 40, a. 1.

spared. Since in "total war" the entire nation of soldiers and civilians is on a war footing, the application of the term "innocent" and "noncombatant" to the civilian population is in danger of becoming more and more meaningless.

The total anarchy which "total war" threatens to inflict upon modern mankind can, it would seem, only be averted by harnessing the forces of war and aggression through the creation of an effective machinery for the *organization of International Peace*. Keenly aware of the devastating effects of international strife on the individual and on society, Immanuel Kant adequately described the present plight of the discordant human family when, in lament and yet not without hope, he wrote: "After a war is ended, at the conclusion of peace, it might not be unfitting for a people to let the feast of thanksgiving be followed by a day of penitence, to ask pardon in the name of the State for the great sin against the Divine Law which the human race still incurs by its unwillingness to submit to a legal constitution in international relations, but rather, proud of its rugged individualism, to resort to the barbaric means of war, a means by which that right which each State seeks to attain can never be safeguarded."[73] Such an international constitution, however, as visualized here by the eighteenth-century philosopher and by those of a like mind, can only grow out of the renovated and reformed will of man. "First and above all," writes Pius XI, "peace must once more enter into the hearts of men. For what good is a merely external peace which is nothing but a conventional form of mutual intercourse? We need much more: we need a peace which permeates the human mind, making it tranquil and inclined to brotherly benevolence."[74]

Is there any hope then that war may be abolished? There is a wide divergence of opinion in this matter between those who hold that war is part of the natural order of things and therefore a necessary and legitimate instrument of national policy, and those who condemn war without any qualification, advocating peace at any price, even at the expense of justice. According to Thomas Hobbes (cf. p. 164), war is not only the occasional manifestation of a "law of nature" but the

[73] Immanuel Kant, *Zum ewigen Frieden* (On Eternal Peace).
[74] Pius XI, *Ubi Arcano Dei*.

genuine "state of nature," and peace is merely the temporary suspension of hostilities by means of an artificial contract. While peace represses the forces of nature, war restores them to their original status, when everybody was everybody's enemy (*homo homini lupus*).

Count Bismarck, in defending his opposition to international disarmament, expressed a view similar to that of Hobbes when he said in 1891: "War is a law of nature: it is the struggle for existence in a more general form, and it will not cease until men have become angels." According to the Prussian historian, Heinrich von Treitschke (1834–1896), "without war there would be no States; it is only in war that a people actually becomes a nation; to expel war from the universe would be tantamount to a mutilation of human nature."[75]

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), in "Thus Spake Zarathustra," asks the question: "You say that a good cause sanctifies even war?" And he answers: "I tell you that a good war sanctifies any cause." And Oswald Spengler (1880–1936) sees in war the efficiently organized struggle for the survival of the strongest. Like Hobbes, he defines diplomacy and politics as a temporary substitute for war and subscribes to the Machiavellian doctrine that it is might which creates right.

The dismal pessimism with regard to human nature which is the common element in this apologetics of war is opposed by the equally unrealistic optimism of the extreme pacifists. While those who see in war the normal and necessary manifestation of the struggle for survival picture man as a beast of prey and thus overlook the rational part of human nature, the apostles of nonviolence and the advocates of peace at any price act, to use Bismarck's phrase, as if men had indeed become angels and as if the mere desire for peace were sufficient to ensure the actual pacification of the world. They underestimate, on the one hand, the strength of human passions and the destructive effects of a weakened or perverted human will and, on the other, the corresponding need for the restraining, educative, and coercive agencies of legal and institutional authority. We have attempted to demonstrate that a *realistic solution* of the problem of war and peace must

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[75] Heinrich von Treitschke, *Politik* (1898).

be sought in the middle between the two extremes: War results as a necessary evil from the lapse of justice and charity, and true peace can only be found in the return to the rules of justice and to "the tranquillity of order."

Chapter Four

MAN AS PRODUCER AND CONSUMER

(Economic Philosophy)

§ 26. Economics and Ethics

THE economic activities of man, like every other aspect of human life, have to be proportioned to and integrated with the metaphysical structure of reality in general and with the metaphysical constitution of human nature and its ultimate end in particular. And just as the principles of political action are derived from the natural and moral law and have to comply with its general precepts, so the theory and practice of economics have to submit to ethical norms and rules which are grounded in the natural and moral law. This is to say that economic philosophy as much as political philosophy must be regarded as a *branch or subdivision of ethics.* An economics, therefore, is morally good and justifiable as long as it recognizes this dependency and thereby acknowledges its proper place in the hierarchy of goods and values. It deteriorates whenever it misjudges the scope and value of economic activities and thus violates that order of reality which St. Thomas Aquinas called "the very best thing in the universe": "To take order away from creatures is to deny them the best thing they possess; for while each of them is good in itself, together they are very good, because of the way in which they are fitted into the order of the universe."[1]

The metaphysical and moral order, therefore, which we have recognized as constituting reality, and by which man's place in the universe is determined, must be extended to and reflected by those human activities which refer to the acquisi-

[1] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles,* III, *cap.* 69.

tion, production, and consumption of economic goods. As the primary purpose and final goal of human existence is the good life or the life of virtue and the attainment of the ultimate end of the "rational appetite" (i.e., the happiness or beatitude resulting from the contemplation of the Supreme Good), economic goods, like other particular goods, are to serve this primary purpose of human life. Economic goods thus become "instruments of virtue." It follows from this that these goods are not ends in themselves, but means to be used for the preservation and perfection of human nature. Their acquisition and use is legitimate as long as their possession contributes to the greater perfection of man: "To strive for external goods is proper to human nature; but they must always be considered as means to an end."[2]

However, man, as we know, is not only a rational-individual but also a sociopolitical animal, and the perfection of his individuality (his "personality") implies the realization of his duties toward himself as well as toward his fellow men (cf. pp. 141 and 201). An immoderate desire for the possession of economic goods or the possession of an excessive amount of such goods is apt to infringe upon the rights of other human beings, resulting in social injustice and social disorder. But an immoderation of desire also disturbs the equilibrium of man's own soul and thus creates disorder in the individual himself. And because this twofold disorder results from a neglect of the Supreme Good for the sake of temporal goods, it seriously interferes with the obligations which man owes to the Supreme Good, i.e., to God. We conclude, therefore, that man's striving for economic goods is legitimate only to the extent that it interferes neither with the order and dignity of human nature nor with man's obligations to his fellow men and to his Creator. This striving is legitimate just as long as it does not lead to the neglect of higher goods.

Now man as a being endowed with intellect and free will is unquestionably superior to his surrounding material environment and to the subrational beings which populate the universe. And by virtue of this metaphysical, moral, and physical position of man in the created universe, the constitutive elements and values of his *personality* rank higher than material

[2] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II–II, q. 118, a. 1.

values and economic goods, and this superiority must be jealously guarded and maintained.

But while man thus holds a superior rank with regard to subrational creatures and may therefore make use of their services, he shares with all other human beings the identical human nature and is therefore never permitted to use them as means, to infringe upon their human rights, to injure or destroy them, except if it be the indirect or accidental destruction which results from legitimate self-defense (cf. p. 209).

From the dominating position which the *human intellect* occupies in the structure of human personality it follows that all the other faculties and constitutive elements of human nature ought to be ruled and controlled by the supremacy of reason: "All external goods," writes St. Thomas Aquinas, "are ordered and subordinated to the internal ones, and thus the body is ordered and subordinated to the soul; the external and corporeal goods are good for man in so far as they serve his intellect."[3] As the elective *power of will* is blind by itself and dependent on the guidance of the intellect (cf. pp. 133 sq.), the will ought to submit to the illumination and guidance of rational judgment. The law of Divine Reason which permeates the entire universe, and whose reflection the "natural light" of human reason discovers in the inner depths of the human mind itself as well as in the external world, enjoins upon man the general rule that "good must be done, and evil must be avoided" (cf. p. 150), leaving it to human judgment and human will to apply this general precept to a multitude of concrete situations and circumstances.

Equipped with the faculties of intellect and will, and aided in his judgments and choices by the general precepts of the natural law, man is in a position to work out a design for individual and social living, in accordance with a scale of values which represents the actual order of reality and which culminates in that master value which he has recognized, subjectively, as the term of his own supreme happiness and, objectively, as the Supreme Good. The higher, therefore, a good ranks in the objective scale of values (i.e., in the order of being or reality and, correspondingly, in the moral order), the more it is to be desired, because the higher it ranks the

[3] *Summa Contra Gentiles*, III, *cap.* 141.

more it is capable of satisfying man's "rational appetite" for Infinite Good, and the greater will be the amount of happiness deriving from its possession. Only the Supreme Good, however, can satisfy the "rational appetite" completely, and only the Supreme Good, therefore, can impart to man lasting happiness (cf. p. 114). Man will have reached his goal when all the intellectual and moral potentialities of his nature have been fully actualized, i.e., when he has attained to the term of all his striving, and when his reason and will fuse in the contemplation of the Absolute Intellect and the Supreme Good.

Where does this brief, but necessary, recapitulation of some of the basic principles of metaphysics and ethics leave the theoretical and applied *science of economics?* Economic theory and practice can either acknowledge its dependence on metaphysical and moral norms, and then they will respect the intrinsic laws of reality and will endeavor to serve the ultimate end of human nature, or economics will have to proclaim its own "autonomy," and then it will be at a loss to find a rational explanation and justification of its own activities and ends. It will come to regard economic activity as an end in itself and will refuse to integrate it with the moral requisites of human nature and the ends of human life.

Referring to the mentality of the modern men of business, Max Weber, the German sociologist, writes: "If we were to ask them about the meaning of their restless activity — the fruits of which they never enjoy . . . they would answer — if they could think of any answer at all — that business with its incessant activity is something which they had come to regard as indispensable for their lives. This is indeed their only motivation, and it is a motivation which reveals . . . the *irrational* character of a mode of living which makes man exist for the sake of his business, not the business for the sake of the man."[4] If, on the other hand, we try to measure and define economic activities by relating them to the principles of the "realistic philosophy," we shall have to admit that economics receives its directives from the primary purpose or final goal of human life, i.e., from the Supreme Good or the end of ends. We shall then have to place the *chief accent on man,* not on those ex-

[4] Max Weber, *Religionssoziologie* I (Tübingen, 1920), p. 54.

ternal goods which are to serve him and aid him in his perfection as a rational and social animal. And we shall recognize as legitimate and justifiable only those economic activities which minister to and satisfy *human needs.*

§ 27. The Dignity of Labor

THOSE activities which have to do with the acquisition, manufacture, or production of external and economic goods are commonly designated as *labor* or *work.* It seems, however, impossible to gain an adequate understanding of labor as a specifically human activity, unless we succeed in relating it to the metaphysical and moral nature of man.

As all beings act in accordance with what they are (*operari sequitur esse*), man, too, follows in all his activities the general laws of his nature. And as this nature is both spiritual and physical, this dual aspect must also be reflected in his activities or in human work. The ultimate principle of action in man as in all other creatures is "nature" and, through nature, the giver of nature or its First and Final Cause. The ultimate principle of all human action, accordingly, is the Creator of human nature, who, by endowing man with reason and freedom, has bestowed on him His own image and likeness.

This metaphysical and moral uniqueness of man must then of necessity be expressed in the nature of his actions. There is therefore not only a difference of degree but a difference in kind between the activities of subrational creatures and the work of man, the rational animal. The eminently *creative* character of human labor results of necessity from man's rationality and personality. We therefore feel justified in defining human labor as a *rational, moral, and personal activity of a rational, self-determining personality.* Its character and its dignity derive from the nature of man.

In its most general sense human labor has the obligatory character of a natural law, imposing upon man definite and inescapable rules of action. As it is natural for the bird to fly, because nature has equipped him with wings, so it is natural for man to work, because nature has provided him

with physical and intellectual organs and faculties, all of them indicative of as many potentialities tending toward actualization. Human life as such is really nothing but a continuous series of such actualizations, and this holds true even of the life of contemplation which, as we have pointed out (cf. pp. 121 sq.), is nothing but the highest, most concentrated, and most unified (i.e., the most spiritual) form of human activity.

We know from our previous considerations that the "realistic philosophy" regards intellectual activity as being not only on a par with but superior to manual labor. But whereas Plato and Aristotle extolled intellectual activity as the only worthy occupation of freemen, St. Thomas Aquinas and the scholastic philosophers in general place great emphasis on the proportionate value and *dignity of manual labor.* For St. Thomas every form of labor, rightly performed, is *a moral activity,* an "office" (*officium*), by which man fulfills the Divine Will and becomes, so to speak, a "creator in the second degree" (Shaftesbury) by imparting form, actuality, and perfection to the manifold potentialities of the material universe. Man, by his own creative activity, becomes an "efficient cause" of the being and perfection of inanimate objects as well as of living creatures. By making proper use of his thought, his will, his skill, his desires, and his inventiveness, man confers his own perfections on other beings. He thus imitates in the limited sphere of his own creative work the Absolute Creativeness of God's "pure actuality." And just as God's Infinite Goodness is diffused in creation, so the human laborer confers some of his own relative goodness upon his work, thereby clothing it with a remote and doubly reflected likeness and sheen of Divine Power, Goodness, and Love: "In many ways the creature strives for a likeness of the Divine, but the most perfect way to attain to that likeness is by becoming a cause of other things or beings; for what on earth is more Divine than to cooperate with God?"[5]

While all human labor bears to a greater or less extent the imprint of the general metaphysical structure of human personality, the labor performed by individual human beings

[5] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles,* III, 21.

differs as much as the laborers differ personally as individuals. "Only generically," says St. Thomas Aquinas, "do human beings constitute a unity, in everything else (e.g., age, sex, race, health, body, soul, etc.) they differ individually from each other."[6] And just as each human person is unique as an individual, so the labor of each human person is unique in its personal quality and character. Hence all human work shares in the universality as well as in the individuality of human nature: it is personal because it is human, and it is individual because it is the work of a concrete human person.

The ultimate meaning of human labor or work thus bears an intimate relation to the ultimate meaning of human life. If we understand labor in this way, it assumes its natural place and function in the universal order of reality: "The entire universe," writes St. Thomas Aquinas, "consists of individual creatures, as a whole is constituted of individual parts. And if we try to discover the ultimate purpose of any whole and its individual parts, we find, first of all, that the individual parts exist for their own proper function and perfection, as the eyes exist for the sake of optical vision; next, the inferior parts exist for the sake of the superior and nobler ones, as the lungs serve the activities of the heart, and as sense knowledge serves intellectual knowledge; and, thirdly, all individual parts together exist for the perfection of the whole, as matter exists for the sake of form, since all individual parts are, so to speak, the material basis of the whole; but, finally, man as a whole exists for an end that is extrinsic to his own nature, viz., the fruition of God. Now in the same way in every part of the universe each creature exists, first of all, for its own proper function and perfection; secondly, the inferior creatures exist for the benefit of the higher and nobler ones, as subrational creatures exist for the benefit of man; all individual creatures together, however, serve the greater perfection of the entire universe; and, finally, the entire universe with all its individual parts is ordered to God as its end, inasmuch as they all by a kind of imitative likeness represent the Divine Goodness and glorify God."[7]

In this Thomistic view of the universe, human life and

[6] *De Regimine Principum*, I, 1.
[7] *Summa Theologica*, I, q. 65, a. 2.

human activity are organically interwoven with the all-pervading designs of a divinely willed order. By being active in accordance with the universal laws of nature, man cooperates with the Divine plan. He serves his Creator by perfecting his own God-given nature and by promoting the common good or the welfare of all. He labors and toils with a view to the ultimate end of life, and his creative work becomes the realization of his perpetual service to the highest good. In this way even the seemingly most insignificant operations are freed from deadening isolation and are related to the total meaning of human existence.

This evaluation of labor prevailed in the relatively static economic system of medieval society, especially as long as political and social economy were based on *personal land tenure* and not yet on the *impersonal power of money*. It still prevails in some of the equally static societies of the Far East as well as in certain monastic, sectarian, and other cooperative groups and in many farming communities in the West, where the dedication to the common good makes for a community of life and work and endows labor with a strong personal and moral accent.

The society which arose from the ruins of the Middle Ages was largely built around the new urban centers of commerce, and as the opportunities for financial investment steadily increased, the new *money economy* completely revolutionized the ideas on the function and significance of labor. Finally, the introduction of labor-displacing machinery and the resultant methods of modern mass production completed this revolutionary process. Economic activities no longer had their meaning and justification circumscribed by the needs of the consumer but had their laws and functions dictated by the increasingly autonomous and arbitrary power of the producer. The principle of *production for use* gave way to the principle of *production for profit,* and in consequence labor lost its highly personal quality and dignity and became a *marketable commodity* for the contending interests of the "labor market." A social rift opened between "capital" and "labor," between employers and wage earners, the former buying labor as a commodity at the cheapest possible price, and the latter selling their labor as a commodity to the highest bidder. On the one

side we find the vested interests of the employers, who own the means of production, and on the other side are the defensively and offensively organized wage earners, the shiftless masses of an expropriated "proletariat," whose only titles to a livelihood are their labor and the proceeds derived from it.

It is obvious that both *capital and labor* are needed for the good of society; it is equally self-evident that the class antagonism centering in the "labor market" creates social unrest and is injurious to the good of individuals as well as to the common good. To regard labor as a marketable commodity not only degrades labor but also the laborer, whose work is increasingly *depersonalized,* until he becomes a mere "factory hand" and a "wage slave" who loses all interest in the nature and quality of his work. "And so bodily labor," writes Pius XI, "has everywhere been changed into an instrument of strange perversion: for dead matter leaves the factory ennobled and transformed, where men are corrupted and degraded."[8]

The remedy of this situation, it would seem, lies in the *repersonalization* of labor and industry and in the harmonization of the interests of labor and management. The achievement of these ends requires a *rationally planned economy* which harnesses and readjusts the economic forces and correlates supply and demand. *Man and human needs* must again become the foci of the economic process, and production must accept the limitations imposed upon surplus and waste by the requirements of social consumption. The employer must realize his social responsibilities as a functionary and trustee of the common good, and the wage earner must be lifted from his proletarian status to a position which safeguards his human dignity and makes him *a coresponsible agent or a copartner in management.* By thus acquiring a *proportionate share in the means of production* the laborer will be given a chance to make proper use of his personal initiative and his creative ability. As long, however, as such a "new order" of society has not come into being, it is the *duty of the State* to act as *the trustee of the common good* by protecting the rights of social groups and classes and especially the rights of those who are by themselves socially or economically too weak to protect themselves from social injustice and economic

[8] *Quadragesimo Anno.*

exploitation. "The richer classes," wrote Leo XIII, "have many ways of shielding themselves, and they therefore stand less in need of help from the State, whereas those who are poor and have no resources of their own must chiefly depend on the assistance of the State. And it is for this reason that wage earners, who are undoubtedly among the weak and needy, must be specially cared for and protected by the State."[9]

Among the protective measures to be taken by the State to ensure the rights of workers, Leo XIII stresses above all the necessity of minimum wage legislation and social legislation, varying in accordance with local conditions, but guaranteeing to the wage earner and his family a decent standard of living and a reasonable amount of physical and economic security. Wages must be high enough to allow for savings as well as for the satisfaction of educational and cultural needs, and both the conditions of work and the number of working hours must be properly adjusted to suit the laborer's health, age, and sex, always leaving sufficient leeway for recreation and leisure.

Both the *right to live* and the *right to work* are natural human rights, and it is the duty of the State to see to it that the individual citizens are offered the opportunity to exercise these rights. The same holds true of the *right to organize* in social and vocational groups or the *right of coalition.* This latter right was recognized as a natural right even in ancient Rome, before the rise of imperial absolutism; it was duly respected by the ancient Germanic tribes, and it constituted the legal and sociological basis of the vocational and guild organizations of the Middle Ages. This right of the workers to unite for the protection of their common interests has been, however, repeatedly abrogated in modern times: first by the absolutistic regimes of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; next by the forces of economic liberalism, in unholy alliance with the modern "police state"; and again by the totalitarian states of the present century. By prohibiting the formation of such natural coalitions or unions, a State, says Leo XIII, "will undermine its own foundations, because the State itself has its origin in the selfsame desire of man for mutual association."[10]

[9] *Rerum Novarum.* [10] *Ibid.*

Finally, to defend their social rights, the workers may legitimately resort to *the strike.* But the strike, like war, is to be regarded as *a last resort of collective self-defense,* after all peaceful means, such as collective bargaining or mediation, have failed. If, furthermore, the workers have freely entered into a just labor contract, they are bound to live up to its terms and have no right to strike. If, on the other hand, their contract has expired, then they may justly raise their claims to any level which seems compatible with justice and equity and, in pursuing this course, they may ultimately resort to what is known as an *"offensive strike."* These demands find their natural limitations in the health and productive capacity of a particular industry or individual plant as well as in the generally prevailing standard of living in a certain economic region. If the payment of higher wages or even of a minimum family wage would be ruinous to the particular industry or employer, then it would be folly to make such demands, and to accede to them would only further dislocate the economic structure and thus harm both employers and wage earners. Similarly, as individual rights are always limited in their extent by the superindividual requisites of the common good, a *general strike,* which endangers the life of the entire community, is never morally justified.

To eliminate class divisions, to harmonize the conflicting interests represented on the "labor market," and to restore the dignity of labor by making it again, to use Leo XIII's words, "an inalienable possession of human personality," Pope Pius XI proposes an *organic reconstruction* of modern society on the basis of *vocational groups* representing the solidaric interests of their individual members. "Labor," he writes, "is not a mere chattel, since the human dignity of the workingman must be recognized in it; and consequently labor cannot be bought and sold like any piece of merchandise. None the less, the demand and supply of labor divides men on the labor market into two classes, as into two camps, and the bargaining between these parties transforms this labor market into an arena of strife. . . . To this grave disorder, which is leading society to ruin, a remedy must evidently be applied as speedily as possible. But there can be no question of any perfect cure unless this antagonism itself can be done away with, and well-

ordered members of the social body can again come into being, viz., *vocational groups,* binding men together not according to the position they occupy in the labor market, but according to the diverse functions which they exercise in society."[11]

Pius XI's idea of vocational groups, integrated in a corporatively organized society, is indebted to *the social philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* and to the labor concepts embodied in the *medieval guilds.* Social order for St. Thomas and his age is "unity in well-arranged multiplicity." It is thus distinguished from the depersonalized uniformity of totalitarian economics, on the one hand, and from the atomistic individualism of liberalist economics, on the other.

The *medieval guilds* at the time of their greatest social influence and prestige (twelfth and thirteenth centuries) functioned as organs in a corporate social body. They protected the interests of the particular trades of their members without losing sight of the ends of the common good of society as such. The guild was a corporation made up of individuals who were unified by common interest and voluntary association. The vocational group imparted to the individual a new consciousness of both his personal and social value, as it freed him from the attachment to the soil and placed him into an organic relationship of responsibility to the State, the city, and his own corporation. In return for the restriction which membership in the guild imposed upon his own social and economic liberty, he received a large amount of social and economic security. To safeguard the efficient control of social economy, to uphold the "honor of the trade," and to serve the interest of the common good, membership in these originally free associations was later on made compulsory by decree of public authority, so that nonmembers could no longer engage in a particular trade unless they were admitted to the guild and were willing to conform to its rules and standards. The guilds regulated prices, laid down definite rules for wages and hours of labor, and exercised control over the quality of goods. More important, however, than the restrictions which they imposed on unlimited profits and unfair competition was the fact that they provided the individual merchants and craftsmen with a reasonable equality of opportunity and thereby

[11] *Quadragesimo Anno.*

encouraged their economic activities and increased their self-respect.

While *Pius XI* pays tribute to the corporative organization of society as exemplified by the guild system, he fully realizes that the social institutions of a past age cannot simply be revived and should not be unimaginatively copied. A different age requires different approaches to the problems of political and social economy and will have to work out its own solutions. But it may nevertheless be profitable to learn the lessons of past approaches and solutions, adapting social accomplishments of a former age to the specific needs and conditions of modern society.

Thus the Pope refers to medieval corporatism as "a social order which, though by no means perfect in every respect, corresponded nevertheless in a certain measure to right reason."[12] He maintains that the breakdown of the corporative organization of society was not due to the fact that it was incapable of development and adaptation to changing needs and circumstances, but was rather caused by "the wrongdoing of men: Men were hardened in excessive self-love, and they refused to extend that order . . . to the increasing numbers of the people; or, deceived by the attractions of a false liberty . . . they grew impatient of every restraint and attempted to throw off all authority."[12]

This analysis implies that what is needed for the healing of the breach between capital and labor, for the elimination of internecine class warfare, and for the rehabilitation of both the laborer and his labor, is not so much new legislation but rather a changed state of mind, a mind ready to accept a philosophy of *"social solidarism,"* in which the rival claims of individuals and classes are harmonized in the cooperatively sought common good.

[12] *Ibid.*

§ 28. Rights and Obligations of Ownership

THE changed concepts of labor in modern times are intimately related to the changed ideas on the nature of ownership and private property. We shall discuss first the rights and obligations of ownership from the point of view of

the "realistic philosophy" and subsequently contrast the older, precapitalistic view with the ownership idea of modern capitalism.

According to Thomistic teaching, man has a natural right to own property. As material goods are for the benefit of man, he may make use of them for his own advantage as well as for that of his fellow men. Man in the individual and personal quality of his life and work, and by virtue of his rational nature, rises above the objects of the material universe and is capable of recognizing their relations, functions, and potentialities. As a free being he can use these potentialities to bring about novel combinations and transformations and can devise various forms of productive and creative activity. This mastery over things, enabling man to select what is best fitted for his personal use and to use it intelligently and with moral propriety, establishes the possession of *private property* as *a natural right.*

However, man is not only an individual but also a social animal, and the same dual aspect of human nature which is manifested in all human activities and institutions is equally inherent in the titles of property. *Property is both individual and social* in its nature. By stressing exclusively either the individual or the social aspect of ownership, society will run the risk of turning toward the extreme positions of either atomistic individualism or depersonalized collectivism: "If the social and public aspect of ownership be denied or minimized, the logical consequence is *individualism* . . .; on the other hand, the rejection or diminution of its private and individual character necessarily leads to some form of *collectivism.*"[13] While, therefore, the right of ownership is a natural right, it is, like all other human rights, subject to the rules and limitations of the natural and moral law. Hence, an absolute right of ownership is strictly denied by medieval economic theory, and only a relative right of ownership is admitted. As God is the creator, giver, and absolute owner of all material goods, human ownership, whether private or public, is mere stewardship.

It follows from the foregoing that the institution of private

[13] Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno.*

property, while indicative of an abiding natural right, is very flexible in the concrete and is sociologically codetermined by changing political and social conditions. St. Thomas Aquinas maintains, on the one hand, that property belongs fully to its owner, but he adds immediately that such "private" ownership implies a host of social obligations and therefore to a certain extent a "socialization" of private property, not in the sense of collective ownership but rather in the sense that private ownership can only justify its title by making the right social use of privately owned goods. St. Thomas Aquinas insists that *human rights* are *superior to property rights* and thus demands precedence for the former whenever required by the individual or social good: "In cases of need," he writes, "all things are common property, and so it would seem that it can be no sin to take another's property, for need has made it common. . . . According to the natural order established by Divine Providence, inferior things are ordained for the purpose of ministering to man's needs. Therefore, the division and appropriation of things as decreed by human law does not countermand the principle that man's needs be satisfied by means of these very things. Hence those things of which some persons have a superabundance ought to be used, according to natural law, for the sustenance of the poor. It is for this reason that Ambrose says: 'This bread which you withhold, is the hungry man's bread; these clothes which you store away, are the clothes of the ill-clad; this money which you bury in the ground, is the ransom money to be paid for the redemption and freedom of the needy.' Since, however, there are many who are in need and since it is impossible to sustain all with the same goods, each one is entrusted with the stewardship of his own possessions, so that he may use them for the sustenance of the poor. If, however, the need is so obvious and urgent that it must be relieved by whatever means are at hand, as, for instance, when a human life is in danger and there is no other possible remedy, then it is legitimate for a person to relieve his own need by making use of another man's property, either openly or secretly; and by doing so he cannot properly be said to commit theft or larceny."[14]

This passage strikingly gives expression to the conviction

[14] *Summa Theologica*, II–II, q. 66, a. 7.

which St. Thomas shares with all medieval economic theorists, that there exists a certain *common ownership* among the members of the human race, and that therefore the actual distribution of private property is in no way to be regarded as rigidly inflexible. According to St. Thomas, "man has a twofold relation to external things, of which one is the power to produce and to consume. And for this it is lawful that man should possess property. . . . The second relation to external things refers to their use, and as far as this is concerned no man ought to have anything proper to himself, but all in common, so that everyone may easily minister to others in their necessities."[15]

These medieval teachings on the individual and social aspects of property and ownership were strictly *adhered to by the reformers* of the sixteenth century. Both Luther and Calvin never doubted that the rights of private property were limited by the rights of the community and the obligations of justice and charity. They did not criticize the medieval theory but rather deplored and castigated the laxity which prevailed in its practical application. Nevertheless, as was the case in the realm of political thought, the new doctrines of the reformers concerning the nature of fallen man and his faculties were instrumental in bringing about decisive changes in economic theory and eventually also in the concept of ownership.

In tracing the origins of modern capitalism, leading contemporary sociologists and economists[16] have pointed out that in particular the Calvinist and Puritan insistence on an absolute predestination of man for either heaven or hell, together with the concomitant fearful responsibility placed on the individual to assure himself and others of his "election," gradually led to an increasing emphasis on individual economic activity and on "success" in business enterprise as an outward manifestation of Divine favor and blessing: "Where Catholic and Anglican," writes R. H. Tawney, "had caught a glimpse of the invisible, hovering like a consecration over the gross

[15] *Summa Theologica*, I–II, q. 66, a. 2.

[16] R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1926); *Werner Sombart, Der moderne Kapitalismus* (1928); *Ernst Troeltsch, The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1931); *Protestantism and Progress* (New York: G. P. Putnan's Sons, 1912); *Max Weber, Protestant Ethics and the "Spirit" of Capitalism* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1930).

world of sense . . . the Puritan mourned for a lost paradise and a creation sunk in sin. Where they had seen society as a mystical body, compact of members varying in order and degree, but dignified by participation in the common life of Christendom, he saw a bleak antithesis between the spirit which quickeneth and an alien, indifferent, or hostile world. . . . Too often contemning the external order as unspiritual, he made it, and ultimately himself, less spiritual by reason of his contempt."[17]

While religion and morality thus withdrew completely into the privacy of the individual soul, the "world" was no longer a realm to be consecrated and transfigured by man's cooperation with God, but at best a kingdom to be conquered by relentless economic activity and at worst a cesspool of sin and corruption: "To insist that the individual is responsible, that no man can save his brother, that the essence of religion is the contact of the soul with its Maker, how true and indispensable! But how easy to slip from that truth into the suggestion that society is without responsibility, that no man can help his brother, that the social order and its consequences are . . . something external, alien, and irrelevant . . . the sphere of the letter which killeth and of the reliance on works which ensnares the soul into the slumber of death! In emphasizing that God's Kingdom is not of this world, Puritanism did not always escape the suggestion that this world is no part of God's Kingdom."[18]

Thus trade and economic activity as such became a kind of religion, and immoderate acquisitiveness, formerly condemned as a social vice, came eventually to be regarded as a Christian virtue: "If God show a way," wrote Richard Baxter (1615–1691), a representative of moderate Presbyterian Calvinism, "in which you may lawfully get more than in another way . . . if you refuse this, and choose the less gainful way, you cross one of the ends of your calling, and you refuse to be God's steward."[19]

Quite consistently, therefore, early capitalism, still motivated by these and similar religious and moral incentives, saw in the accumulation of a maximum of economic goods a desirable

[17] Tawney, *op. cit.*, p. 229.
[18] Tawney, *op. cit.*, p. 254.
[19] Richard Baxter, *Christian Directory* (1678), I, p. 336b.

and divinely sanctioned goal. To facilitate its attainment it adopted a theory of ownership and of the individual rights entailed in it which became indistinguishable from economic liberalism as soon as the original religious and moral motivations were forgotten or discarded. Early capitalism was then at least indirectly coresponsible for the creation of an "autonomous" economics divorced from the natural and moral law and for the rise of a new type of man, the *homo oeconomicus* of the industrial age. A man's property was henceforth regarded as his absolute and inalienable possession, in the sense that no social and moral obligations were attached to it and that consequently he could manipulate it in any way he pleased. And it became the main duty of the liberal-capitalistic State to protect these absolute property rights.

However, the boundless striving for economic goods, coupled with the principle of unlimited competition and with the increasing opportunities for large-scale investments, led in the end to the concentration of wealth in the hands of giant monopolies, shielding their holdings by joint liability and corporate capitalistic ownership. The concentrated power of the Trust, the Cartel, and the huge Banking Concern began to absorb the titles of individual ownership and, by manipulating the money and goods of individual investors at their own will and discretion, deprived the institution of private property of much of its original meaning. "It is patent," writes Pius XI, describing this development, "that in our days not alone is wealth accumulated, but immense power and despotic economic domination is concentrated in the hands of a few, and that those few are frequently not the owners, but only the trustees and directors of invested funds, administering them at their will. . . . They hold and control money, are able to govern credit and to determine its allotment and thus supply, so to speak, the lifeblood to the entire economic body, grasping as it were in their hands the very soul of production, so that no one dare breathe against their will. . . . This accumulation of power is a natural result of limitless free competition which permits the survival of those who are strongest, which often means those who are most ruthless and pay least heed to the dictates of conscience."[20]

[20] *Quadragesimo Anno.*

The development of modern capitalism thus verifies Plato's dictum that "the excessive increase of anything often causes a reaction in the opposite direction": the excessive and unlimited freedom of economic liberalism has turned into a modern form of economic enslavement. The centralized ownership of land of Imperial Rome and of early medieval feudalism has its modern counterpart in the centralized power of money and industry, the characteristic marks of contemporary capitalism.

While economic totalitarianism in its socialist and fascist branches proposes not the restoration of private ownership but its abolition by means of communization or nationalization, those who favor an economic philosophy of "solidarism" strive in one form or another for correctives which would check the abuses of both individualism and centralism and would result in a *wider diffusion or redistribution of private property,* with a view to the good of the individual and to the common welfare of all. The so-called "distributists" (G. K. Chesterton, H. Belloc, R. Hoffmann, E. Gill, etc.), advocating the restoration of property rights and of the means of production in agriculture and industry to the individual workers, seem to be in essential agreement with certain ideas advanced at a much earlier date by Thomas Jefferson, who envisaged a solution of the social problems of his time through the creation of communities of landowning small farmers. "Property," writes Eric Gill, "is natural to man; . . . it is a bulwark against the exploitation of man by man; . . . unless you own the means of production you cannot control production; . . . unless you control you cannot be responsible; . . . responsibility for his deeds . . . is the very mark of man. . . . The injustices of property owners in the past have only been possible because the few owned too much and the many nothing at all. The law therefore should favor ownership, whereas at present it favors exploitation."[21]

As the centralization of ownership in the hands of a minority works largely for the protection of producer interests, the movement of *consumer cooperatives* marks an important step toward a healthy balancing of the social order and toward

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[21] Eric Gill, *Autobiography* (New York: Devin-Adair Co., 1941), pp. 296 sq.

a wider diffusion of ownership. But consumer cooperatives are essentially *defensive* organizations for the protection of the consumers and will therefore become unnecessary at the moment when a true harmonization of the interests of producers and consumers will have been achieved. A society which succeeds in preserving private initiative and in directing it fraternally toward the common good will combine the rights of individual ownership with the responsibilities of cooperative ownership. It seems that such a solution of the social question can be found in the *vocational organization* of society, in which the *partnership of capital and labor* will have its common term in the satisfaction of the imperative needs of producers and consumers alike. In such a society the abundance of goods produced will not be unnaturally withheld from the masses of the consumers but will be most widely distributed and will thus contribute to the *humanization of modern civilization* as a whole and to the greater goodness and happiness of every individual.

Conclusion

MAN—WORLD—GOD

WE HAVE tried in the preceding pages to discover "principles of thought and action in a changing world." To do this we had to delve deeply into that realm of being in which both thinking and doing are grounded and from which they receive not only their lifeblood but also their laws and directives. "If we want to think well," writes D. Jaime Balmes, "we must first learn to know the truth, i.e., the reality of things. For what good would it do to carry on subtle or seemingly profound discussions, if our thinking were not tuned to reality? The simple workingman, the modest artisan, who have a thorough knowledge of the tools and objects of their trade, think and speak about these things with much greater competence than a presumptuous philosopher who makes bold to lecture to people in nebulous concepts and high-sounding phrases on matters which he does not understand."[1]

It seems to us, then, that a philosophy, to be acceptable to the contemporary scholar and the average reader alike, must be a "living philosophy" in a dual sense: it must be alive, and it must be such that its principles and terms can be translated into life. It is our contention that a philosophy which is both alive and can be lived must have its roots and foundations in reality: it must be a *realistic* philosophy.

A realistic philosophy is of necessity bound by the exigencies of reality. By definition it is compelled to take into account every aspect of reality upon which the searchlight of human reason can be turned. In its quest of ultimate truth it will try to discover the unity which underlies multiplicity, the constancy which underlies change, the continuity which integrates past and present, tradition and progress.

It is our conviction (1) that such a philosophy actually exists; (2) that it can and must be reformulated in the terms

[1] Dr. D. Jaime Balmes, *El Criterio*, 24th ed. (Barcelona: 1920), pp. 5 sq.

and within the framework of contemporary thought. It can and must be effectively expressed in such a way that the lasting principles of thought and action acquire new meaning and may serve as practical guides in the highly complex situations of modern individual and social life.

A philosophy which is thus perennially alive deals realistically with the entire universe of beings, events, and facts, and with all those relations which obtain among and between them. Probing into the nature of reality, it describes the nature of "being" as well as the natures and activities of multiform "beings." Focusing its attention on *man,* it recognizes in him some specific characteristics which seem to assign to him a unique position in the created universe. In human *reason* and in human *freedom* it finds signs and symptoms of a greatness compared with which the entire universe appears small. Man, the rational and free animal, acquires thus an extraordinary significance: he is an end in one respect and a beginning in another; the highest animal and the lowest spirit.

It is true, when we compare the measurements of the human body with the vast proportions of the universe, man appears as a mere nothing. It is no less true that this same human body appears as the body of a giant when we compare it with the smallest structural units of matter, with electrons, protons, neutrons, and positrons. And yet, whether we emphasize the relative physical smallness or the relative physical greatness of man, the conclusion is unavoidable that the structure of human nature as such and in its entirety is something unprecedented; that the powers which animate human mind and human will are different in kind from those forces which are active in the kingdoms of minerals, plants, and brutes. But when this has been admitted, there still remains the possibility of comparative evaluation and measurement: man is certainly deeply embedded in nature and to a large extent subject to its laws. They rule over man as they rule over the rest of creation: the human body is subject to the law of gravity, to the laws of nutrition and digestion, of metabolism, and of inner secretion. And even human consciousness is at times dominated or dimmed by forces which are to some extent incalculable or unintelligible. The laws of nature often play as mercilessly with human lives as they do with the lives of plants and insects. In other words, the physi-

cal position of man in the universe is as good or as bad as that of any other created being. Man finds himself enmeshed in the frailty and relativity of his fellow beings in the physico-material order.

From what observations does philosophic reflection then derive its claim that man occupies an exceptional and incomparable position in the universe? First of all, as mentioned above, from the observation of the processes and functions of man's rational life. The powers of cognition and intellection seem to differ essentially from the faculty of sensation or sense perception. Secondly, from the observation of the functions and activities of man's volitional life. The domain of the human will, including as it were the faculty of a free and rationally illuminated choice, transcends in degree as well as in kind the realm of instincts and urges. Human will implies independence, self-determination, autonomy, freedom. Is this then the point at which man escapes from the relativity of existence and enters the sphere of "the absolute"? Sober philosophic analysis tells us that this is not the case. A simple glance upon the several provinces of human thinking and doing, upon intellectual life as such as well as upon its reflection in the sciences, in the arts, and in all those other activities and creative accomplishments which in their totality constitute human civilization and culture, teaches us that "man in the world," i.e., man within the cosmos of civilization and human relations, is still involved in relativity and change, even within the proper domain of the human intellect and the human will. Nevertheless, once we reach, in the gradations of being, the level of human existence, the scene changes vastly. The intellectual landscape in its boundlessness appears to suggest the possibility of infinite intellectual growth. Looking out of the window of our individuality, we behold the manifoldness of being and reality as within our reach. But, alas, the realization is soon forced upon us that the power of our actual reach and grasp is limited, that we grope laboriously in partial darkness, that our cognition as well as our intuition is still unable to attain to more than fragmentary views of reality. And we become ever more acutely conscious of the fact that the whole of reality is more than the sum total of all the fragments which we actually possess or could possibly possess.

Relativity also attaches to the changing events and aspects of *history*. When we compare modern civilization with the civilizations of the past we no longer delude ourselves, as did the historiographers of the eighteenth century, into believing that we are standing on a summit and that no further climbing is possible or necessary. As we look backward, a great length of time seems to separate this modern age of science and technology from the primitive world and outlook of the cave dwellers. But as we look at the paintings which adorned the walls of the prehistoric caves of Spain and France, as we study the Mediterranean civilizations of antiquity, the civilizations of the Euphrates and the Nile, the ancient civilizations of Asia, it seems that the span of time that separates us from past ages becomes rather insignificant. We learn that men have been living upon this earth in whom the genius of the race achieved its fullest realization, so that a further ascent appears hardly conceivable. Viewing, on the other hand, the various forms of contemporary social and communal life, the relations between individuals, groups, states, and nations, we find them far from ideal: in many places conditions of such horrifying and barbaric primitivity seem to prevail that an impartial observer might arrive at the conclusion that scarcely a start has been made and that the whole burden of the realization of man's cultural and social destiny is thrown upon future generations.

What, then, remains of the greatness which we have claimed for man? If we want to save this claim from ridicule, we must demonstrate that man, by virtue of his reason and his freedom, has often risen and is always capable of rising above the sequence of purely physical facts and events, above the relative processes and laws of nature and history. We believe that we have offered this demonstration in the preceding chapters of this book. We believe that we have proved that the material universe and its evolutionary laws provide merely the foundation and the background for the vocation of the human soul. The "intentional object," however, of the human soul and its faculties or capacities for infinite truth (intellect) and infinite good (will) is *God,* the source of all truth and goodness. The human soul thus aims beyond itself to that plenitude of being in which its own being will be perfected

and its striving will come to rest. "All creatures by their nature tend toward rest," wrote John Ruysbroeck, the famous Dutch mystic of the fourteenth century. And, centuries earlier, St. Augustine had expressed the same thought in the well-known words: "Thou hast created us for Thyself, and restless is our heart until it comes to rest in Thee."

* * *

A time of crisis asks of us that we be ready for new tasks, for the solution of new problems. We have stressed in the introduction to this book that one of the characteristic features of our age is its renewed craving for absolutes, a craving which in many parts of the earth has led men to create and embrace pseudo absolutes in the form of moral, economic, or political ideologies. Closely allied with the still largely prevalent philosophies of materialism and positivism is often a misdirected "idealism," attaching itself almost fanatically to the goods and values of the material universe, somehow convinced that the purely transitory will in the end yield an eternal meaning. And yet, the structure of life and society is much too unstable and unbalanced to invite or justify such implicit confidence; and thus most of these idealistic ventures end in disappointment, skepticism, and despair.

Tragic indeed is the plight of modern man. The more sincere he is the greater is his anxiety to balance his life's account. Having learned to doubt everything, he is no longer sure of anything, including his own self. He thus feels inclined to yield to the temptation of nihilism. In such a situation it becomes more than ever the great mission of philosophy and religion to restore, first of all, the image of man in its original purity and its true proportions, and, secondly, to lead man back on the road to that reality which he had come to view with such baseless distrust and disgust.

Confronted once more with his own true self and with a reality in which he confides, man may emerge from his dejection with a sharpened sense of personal responsibility and a new eagerness for moral action in individual and social life. A human existence that has once been shaken to its very depths is usually more willing to face squarely the fundamental

problems of life and death than one which knows of neither height nor depth.

Can philosophy aid man in finding himself, in finding the world, in finding his God again? If it could not, then this book would have been written in vain. If, on the other hand, philosophy is capable of performing this service, its eminently practical value will have been vindicated. It will rejoice at what it is able to accomplish in its own limited sphere, and it will then step aside to make room for that superior discipline which alone can guide man to his supernatural destiny.

* * *

Operari sequitur esse (action follows being): these three words express the relationship which exists between thought and action, between theory and practice, between speculative and practical reason, between metaphysics and ethics. Every "existential" philosophy — whether it be that of St. Augustine or that of Martin Heidegger — will have to subscribe to this truth. And as a philosopher's understanding of "being" determines his understanding of life, so "human being" for St. Augustine has its frame of reference and ultimate term in Divine Being, while for Heidegger both being and life terminate in death and nothingness. Generally speaking, the actions of creatures express their being. We have had occasion, however, to point out why in the case of the human creature not all the "acts of man" are, strictly speaking, "human acts" (cf. p. 111). "Human acts" in the proper sense of the term, on the other hand, have their roots in and emanate from "human being."

Considering the hierarchy of goods and values, we have demonstrated, if there was any need of demonstration, that men are more important than things and that therefore human and personal values are of deeper significance than political and economic values or those institutions in which such values are embodied. We have seen institutions and organizations of every kind totter and tumble and leave scarcely a trace, although they had long enjoyed the homage of men. All human institutions live only from borrowed life, and they live only as long as they stand in the service of life. Life itself, however, is most luminously manifested in the wise and good man, the

lover of truth and goodness and beauty. The interior life of man is strong enough indeed to transform and reform reality in his own image. And this power is the power of pure human "being": being which radiates and begets action.

Modern mankind has accomplished miracles in the exploration and scientific integration of the cosmos of physical nature. It is now confronted with the much greater task of exploring and construing the cosmos of human relations, the cosmos of social life. The solution of this task requires more than mere intelligence, more than mere genius, more than mere will power. And once more philosophy can offer its guidance only part of the way, while it remains for supernatural grace to come to the aid of the works of nature and lead them to perfection. The reconstruction of society and civilization requires the intellectual and moral effort of human persons in whom head and heart and hand, intellect, emotion, and will are working in unison, motivated and animated by the prime mover of all physical motion as well as of all human thought and action.

GLOSSARY

Aesthetics. The philosophic discipline which deals with the values and evaluations of the beautiful in art and nature, as well as with the laws and criteria of creative activity and appreciation in all the arts. It investigates and appraises styles and modes of expression in the arts as well as their psychological and sociological significance. — The works of Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, G. E. Lessing, Shaftesbury, Kant, Schelling, Schopenhauer, Hegel abound with aesthetic speculation. St. Thomas Aquinas designates proportion, integrity, and clarity as prerequisites of beauty and aesthetic pleasure.

Agnosticism. A philosophic view which holds with Du Bois-Reymond (1818–1896) that no knowledge of the transcendent, suprasensible, and supernatural is possible (*ignoramus et ignorabimus:* we do not and we shall not know). Agnosticism shares its antimetaphysical attitude with positivism, although it does not categorically deny the existence of suprasensible reality but rather its knowability. Its teachings were condemned by the Vatican Council (1869–1870) and again in Pope Pius X's Encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (1907).

Atheism. The denial of the existence of God as a supreme principle or being, implying the contention that the world and its creatures exist of and through themselves. Atheism is frequently associated with skepticism, positivism, pantheism, naturalism, and materialism. — Prominent representatives: Lamettrie, Holbach, Schopenhauer, Karl Marx, Nietzsche, John Dewey.

Atomism. The philosophic view which assumes that all things are composed of smallest indivisible and impenetrable physical, psychical, or spiritual parts or elements, and that all physical and mental processes can be reduced to varying movements and combinations of such "atoms" or "monads." — Democritus, Epicurus, Lucretius, Holbach, etc., were representatives of physical or materialistic atomism, while Spencer, Taine, Haeckel, Fechner and, on a spiritualistic basis, Leibniz developed systems of psychical atomism.

Axiom. A self-evident principle which as such neither stands in need of nor admits of any demonstrations, but which may serve as a basis for demonstrations. Axioms may be ontological, logical, mathematical, physical, mechanical, etc.

Behaviorism. A contemporary, notably American, philosophical, and psychological system of thought which tries to explain all the vital functions and activities of plants, animals, and human beings as "con-

ditioned reflexes" or as reactions and responses to certain stimuli. Behaviorism denies or disregards all intramental or psychical phenomena and discards all the traditional psychological concepts, such as those pertaining to emotion, imagination, ideation, apperception, thought, memory, etc. It confines its interest and research to the modes of external behavior, which it regards as causally conditioned by external circumstances and influences (*milieu*). "Stimuli" and "responses" produce "habit patterns," and these patterns are the sole contents of life on the lowest as well as on the highest levels. All emotional and other psychological states are reduced to anger, fear, and love. Behaviorist psychology is out and out materialistic. Its influence is especially strong in American "progressive" education. — Chief representatives: John B. Watson, Edward Thorndike, and (more moderately) John Dewey and his followers.

Causality. The principle of causality expresses the relationship which exists in the universe between cause and effect. It maintains that everything which comes into being is caused by or is the effect of something which *is*. This principle was characterized by David Hume as a psychological fallacy and by Kant as denoting a purely subjective category of the understanding (*Verstandeskategorie*).

Classical Political Economy. A term used to designate the economic theories of Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, David Ricardo, and J. B. Say. These authors base their theories on the conditions prevalent in England during the early stages of modern industrialism. Underestimating the historical and sociological aspects of political economy, they describe economic processes exclusively in terms of economic exchange between individuals. Optimistically they believe in a natural harmony of economic interests, resulting from the prudent pursuit of individual self-interest. But, pessimistically, they maintain that nothing can and should be done for the benefit of the proletarian masses, since as a consequence of the inexorable "natural laws" of economy any attempt to improve the lot of the poor is doomed to failure. They therefore demand of the State a policy of noninterference or *laissez faire* (economic liberalism).

Contingence, Contingency. A term referring to all those things which do not exist of *necessity*, i.e., which come into being and whose nonexistence involves no contradiction. The contingency of the created universe forms the basis of the demonstration of the existence of God "from contingency" (cosmological proof).

Cosmology. The philosophic discipline which deals with the universe, its origin, duration, constituent parts, forces, laws, and order. It is a part of the philosophy of nature.

Criticism. A term designating the method used by Kant in opposition to his teacher Wolff's "uncritical dogmatism" and to David Hume's skepticism. This method consists essentially in an epistemological investigation of "pure reason" as an instrument of knowledge.

Deism. The theory which posits a Deity which created the world and then left it to itself without intervening in any way with the course of nature and human life. Thus, in contrast to atheism, deism posits a transcendent God, but, in contrast to theism, it sees in Him only the "author," not the ruler and sustainer of the created universe. The chief representatives of deism in England were the "freethinkers" of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Herbert of Cherbury, Chas. Blount, J. Toland, M. Tindal). The French deism of the same period frequently borders on naturalism and atheism (the Encyclopaedists; D'Alembert, Voltaire, Rousseau). German deism of the age of "enlightenment" is represented by Reimarus, Lessing, and Moses Mendelssohn. All deists concurred in the demand of a "natural religion," freed from the "shackles" of dogmatic, ecclesiastical, and institutional Christianity.

Determinism. The doctrine which denies the freedom of the human will and regards all actions and volitions as strictly *determined* by external and internal causes or motivations. — Outstanding representatives of rigid philosophical determinism were Priestley, Hobbes, Holbach, Haeckel, Nietzsche, John Stuart Mill. A *theological determinism* (denial of free will; absolute predestination) was taught by Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli.

Dialectic. Denotes the logical movement of thought from one concept to another by means of the resolution of contradictions. In Plato's philosophy the aim of dialectics is the discovery of the pure, ideal concepts. For Hegel dialectic is the "self-development of ideas" (*Selbstbewegung der Begriffe*): the "dialectic of history" proceeds in the form of the "dialectical triad" of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis (dialectical idealism). A similar dialectical movement forms the theoretical foundation of Karl Marx's "dialectical materialism."

Dualism. The doctrine which, as against monism, assumes two constitutive principles of reality, which are either conceived as opposed to one another (extreme dualism) or as irreducible to each other (moderate dualism). An extreme dualism was taught by Plato, Manes (Manichaeism), William of Occam, Descartes; a moderate dualism by Aristotle, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, and by all those philosophers who recognized the "analogy of being," while at the same time they insisted on the essential distinctions between God and world, Creator and creature, mind and matter.

Dynamism. A theory of reality which reduces all the phenomena of nature and mind to the movement of physical (materialistic dynamism) or spiritual (spiritualistic dynamism) forces. Leibniz's "monadology" is an outstanding example of spiritualistic dynamism.

Empiricism. The doctrine which maintains that all knowledge is sense experience. In its extreme form (positivism, semanticism, etc.) empiricism denies the validity of all intellectual or rational knowledge or confines knowledge to such experimental data as may be expressed in sensorimathematical symbols (logical empiricism, symbolic

logic). Chief representatives in modern times: Francis Bacon, Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Condillac, and the contemporary "logical empiricists" of the "School of Vienna" (Carnap, Reichenbach, Neurath, Schlick, etc.).

Epistemology. The philosophic discipline which deals with the theory, the validity, and the truth content of cognition or knowledge.

Ethics. The philosophic discipline which deals with the nature of morality as a norm of human acts. As a practical science, ethics examines these acts in so far as they are conformable or nonconformable to an objective standard of goodness, discoverable by human reason.

Eudemonism. The theory which holds that the ultimate aim and end of morality is the happiness of the individual or of society. According to the different ways in which happiness is conceived or defined, different forms of eudemonism may be distinguished: If the pleasure of the senses is regarded as the ultimate end of life, eudemonism assumes the form of *hedonism;* if the essence of happiness is seen in social progress, eudemonism turns into *utilitarianism;* if it is maintained that happiness consists in the realization of eternal norms, eudemonism acquires the characteristics of *Platonic idealism;* if supreme happiness is defined as the realization of the potentialities and faculties of human nature, in conformity with the Divine and natural law, eudemonism appears in the form of *Aristotelian and Thomistic realism,* in the latter instance providing however for the glory of God as the absolutely ultimate end with which man's happiness is combined. — Kant maintained that any kind of eudemonism rests on a perverted concept of morality. His "autonomous" morality makes allowance only for motivations of "duty" and excludes those of happiness.

Fideism. The doctrine which maintains that human reason is impotent as an instrument of rational knowledge and that certitude is gained by "faith alone." — (Occam, Luther, Kierkegaard, Karl Barth, etc.)

Finality. Denotes the natural growth or development of individual beings and of the universe as a whole toward their ends or final destination (teleology), in accordance with a Divine plan or design. — The concept of finality was introduced into philosophical speculation by Plato and Aristotle, and was later on developed in greater depth and implemented with the Christian ideas of creation and redemption by St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas.

Gnosticism (from Gr. *gnosis:* knowledge, cognition; secret, esoteric knowledge). A name applied to a number of heretical sectarian movements which threatened the early Christian Church (first to third century) and which were fiercely attacked by some of the leading Church Fathers. Gnosticism is the rationalistic counterpart of "fideism"; it places exclusive emphasis on rational knowledge (*gnosis*) rather than faith (*pistis*) as a means to penetrate into the Divine mysteries and as a prerequisite for salvation. — *Theosophy* is a modern form of gnosticism. Outstanding gnostics: Valentinian, Basilides, Marcion.

HEDONISM: see EUDEMONISM.

IDEALISM. In a general sense, the doctrine which holds that the world is conditioned by ideas or by spiritual principles, and that visible reality is the mere reflection of eternal ideas (the "metaphysical idealism" of Plato, the Platonists, and Neo-Platonists). — *Absolute idealism* is the doctrine, taught by Hegel and other German idealists of the early nineteenth century, that the world and everything in it are merely representations of inner states of mind and consciousness of the thinking ego and that this thinking ego is only a part of the Infinite or Absolute Ego. In this Absolute Ego the real and the ideal, object and subject, nature and spirit, the thinker and the object thought are ultimately identical ("philosophy of identity"). *Epistemological idealism* maintains that the external world exists only in subjective consciousness and has no existence outside the thinking mind, and that the contents of knowledge derive not from an objective reality but exclusively from the consciousness of the thinking subject. *Transcendental idealism* holds with Kant that the human mind imposes its own innate and "a priori" forms of apperception and understanding upon the multiple impressions it receives from an unknown and unknowable "thing-in-itself" and thus builds up its knowledge by way of a subjective structural synthesis.

LOGIC. The philosophic discipline which deals with the principles, laws, and methods of accurate thinking. While logic provides the *formal* criteria of correct thinking, epistemology investigates the "material" contents and constitutive elements of thought. — The founder of the science of logic is Aristotle.

LOGICAL EMPIRICISM. See EMPIRICISM.

MANICHAEISM. A syncretistic (mixed) Persian form of "gnosticism," founded by *Manes* (circa 215–277) and based on the extreme dualism (assuming two supreme principles, one good, one evil) of the ancient Iranian religion of Zoroaster or Zarathustra, with added elements of Babylonian, Chaldaeic, Jewish, and Christian doctrines. During the early Christian centuries Manichaeism spread to India and China and temporarily gained a strong foothold in Spain and North Africa. St. Augustine, who had himself been a member of the Manichaean sect, attacked Manichaeism after his conversion to Christianity. During the Middle Ages the Manichaean tradition provided a fertile soil for the growth of many heresies, all of which were characterized by their exaggerated metaphysical dualism.

MATERIALISM. Denotes any doctrine which regards matter, or material force, or the corporeal world, as the one and only reality. *Historic* and *economic materialism* (Marxism) try to explain all historical, cultural, and economic phenomena, including religious creeds and philosophical systems, as "superstructures" resulting from changing material (economic, in the case of Marx) "substructures." — Leading representa-

tives: Democritus, Lamettrie, Holbach, Haeckel, Marx, Engels, Lenin.

METAPHYSICS. The science of the ultimate reasons (causes) and properties of being and existence as such, as well as of all beings and existents. *General metaphysics,* dealing with "being as such," is usually called *ontology,* while the term *special metaphysics* is used to designate the discipline which examines the different realms, classes, and gradations of being (philosophy of nature; rational psychology; natural theology or theodicy: the world, the soul, and God).

MONISM. The doctrine which tries to explain reality by tracing it back to one single principle of either mind (idealism) or matter (materialism) and therefore denies any real metaphysical distinction between body and soul, mind and matter, God and world. Monism is thus opposed to both *dualism* and *pluralism.* — Representatives of *idealistic monism* are, among others, Plotinus, Giordano Bruno, Spinoza, Leibniz, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel. *Materialistic monists* are the German philosophers D. F. Strauss, L. Buechner, G. Vogt, Moleschott.

NATURALISM. The doctrine which teaches that all the phenomena of cultural and intellectual life are ultimately expressions or manifestations of material or corporeal nature and of natural instincts and urges. Naturalism is therefore usually anti-intellectualistic; it regards the intellect as inimical to the biological vitality of the individual and the race. — Prominent adherents of naturalism: Karl Marx, Nietzsche, Oswald Spengler, Ludwig Klages in Germany; John Dewey with his following of "progressive" educators in the United States.

NATURAL THEOLOGY. See THEODICY.

NECESSITY. That which exists in such a way that its nonexistence involves a contradiction and is therefore impossible, is said to exist of necessity. It is existence *per se,* whereas all contingent being exists *ab alio.* The one being which exists by unconditional necessity, i.e., whose essence is his existence, and whose not being or nonexistence is self-contradictory, is God. His being and existence in turn explain the existence of everything contingent.

NIHILISM. The negation of all positive values, norms, and standards. Nihilism may be *theoretical* or *practical:* theoretical nihilism denies the possibility of valid knowledge as well as the reality of the external, extramental world; practical or *moral nihilism* denies all absolute or generally binding norms of action. *Political nihilism* flourished as an anarchistic movement in Russia during the latter part of the nineteenth century, and the term "nihilism" was popularized by Turgeniev, who had used it to characterize the hero (Basarov) of his novel "Fathers and Sons."

NOUMENON. Designates in a general sense reality as conceivable in thought, in contrast to reality as known by sense perception alone. For *Kant* the noumena are the unknowable "things-in-themselves" (*Dinge an sich*) which underlie the objects of sense experience (the "phenomena").

ONTOLOGISM. The doctrine which teaches that the ideas in the human mind are not gathered by human rational effort but are directly derived from an intuition of God (Malebranche, Gioberti, Jules Fabre, Maret, Rosmini, etc.).

ONTOLOGY. The philosophic discipline which deals with "being as such," i.e., with being in its most general aspects; also known as the "first philosophy" (philosophia prima) or *general metaphysics,* as distinct from *special metaphysics* which deals with the specific realms, classes, and gradations of being. See METAPHYSICS.

PANTHEISM. The doctrine which identifies God and the universe. Whereas *theism* regards God as both the transcendent Creator and ruler and immanent sustainer of the universe and of man, pantheism sees in the Deity an impersonal principle or force coextensive with the world (Giordano Bruno, Spinoza, Schelling). See THEISM.

PHENOMENALISM. In a general sense the doctrine which holds that the world of sense is not the true reality but merely the "appearance" of an underlying reality (Platonism, Buddhism, Brahmanism). — In a more restricted sense the epistemological doctrine of Kant, who claims in his *Critique of Pure Reason* that only "appearances" (phenomena), but not the "things-in-themselves" (noumena), can become objects of true or scientific knowledge.

PHENOMENON. Designates the object of sense perception, as distinct from the "noumenon," i.e., reality as conceived by the mind (cf. noumenon). This distinction between "phenomenon" and "noumenon" was first made by Plato; it was used by Kant, who in his epistemology distinguishes between the knowable and known "phenomena" or "appearances" and the unknowable "noumena" or "things-in-themselves."

PHYSIOCRATS. A group of political economists (Quesnay, Turgot, Mirabeau, Sr., etc.) who emphasize against the "mercantilists" and their underestimation of agriculture the importance of the produce of the soil for the well-being of society (*la terre est l'unique source des richesses*). They are representatives of the age of "Enlightenment" and its "progressive" ideology. They anticipate the views of economic liberalism in holding that economics is subject to definite, unchangeable, and so-called "natural laws," and that it is the task of political economy to recognize these laws and to make society conform to them. The motivating and ruling force of social life and social progress they see in enlightened self-interest. They therefore demand that the State confine its activities to the removal of such impediments as might prevent these supposed economic "laws" from taking their natural course.

PLURALISM. (1) Any doctrine which, as against monism and dualism, asumes several (more than two) mutually irreducible ultimate principles or forms of being or reality. (2) Denotes any social or civil order which admits of several autonomous, i.e., legally or constitutionally independent units or powers.

Positivism. The theory which claims that the only valid knowledge is "scientific" knowledge, i.e., the knowledge of what is given in sense perception and verifiable by the experimental method. It is antimetaphysical, denies the value of genuinely philosophical or rational speculation, and substitutes for it the methods of the mathematical and physical sciences. Everett W. Hall ("Metaphysics," in *Twentieth Century Philosophy,* N. Y., 1943, pp. 147–194) distinguishes the following four types: (1) *agnostic positivism* (E. Mach, Kant); (2) *classificatory positivism* (the task of philosophy is the historical and systematic classification of the sciences: Auguste Comte); (3) *psychological positivism* (philosophy is concerned exclusively with language and behavior habits: John B. Watson's "behaviorism"); (4) *logical positivism:* semanticism or logical empiricism (cf. *empiricism*).

Pragmatism. The epistemological doctrine which maintains that life and action establish the truth value of thought, or that social utility is the criterion of truth. Pragmatism thus sees in "truth" only an instrumental aid for the achievement of individual or social progress and explicitly denies the possibility of an absolute or universally valid truth. Prominent pragmatists: Ch. Peirce, William James, F. C. S. Schiller, John Dewey.

Realism. (1) *Epistemological realism* rests on the conviction that an extramental reality exists, independent of subjective consciousness; (2) *naïve realism* assumes that everything exists extramentally in exactly the same way in which it is perceived or experienced subjectively; (3) *critical realism* tries to disengage the objective extramental qualities of the objects of thought or consciousness from the subjective elements (e.g., sense qualities) and to define and analyze both; (4) *metaphysical realism* rests on the conviction (*a*) that to the universal ideas correspond universal essences in real objects (extreme realism); or (*b*) that the roots of the universal ideas are contained in real objects and can therefore be predicated of individual things univocally (moderate realism). See Universals.

Semanticism. A form of naturalistic empiricism, developed especially by the "School of Vienna" (see Empiricism). It is primarily concerned with problems of meaning, definition, and syntax and their translation into sensorimathematical signs and symbols ("logical symbolism" or "symbolic logic").

Skepticism. The doctrine which denies that there is any truth whatsoever. *Philosophical skepticism* extends this denial to all the objects and propositions of metaphysics, ethics, and religion. *Methodical skepticism,* on the other hand, uses the device of "methodical doubt" (Descartes, Husserl) for the purpose of more exact investigation and demonstration. Representatives of philosophical skepticism: the sophists, Pyrrhon, Hume, O. Spengler.

Spiritualism. The doctrine which holds that the entire universe is of a spiritual nature and that everything which appears as corporeal is the

manifestation of an all-pervasive spiritual reality. Spiritualism is thus a special variety of *monism* and *pantheism* and opposed to materialism. Chief representatives are, among others, Berkeley, Leibniz, and Bergson.

Theism. A philosophic doctrine or system which recognizes a personal God as creator, ruler, and sustainer of the universe. This doctrine implies both God's transcendence (His being *above* the world) and God's immanence (His being *within* the world *per essentiam,* as its sustaining principle). According to the testimony of the comparative history of religion, theism is the oldest religious conviction of the human race, whereas polytheism (belief in several gods) is a symptom of later and decadent forms of religion.

Theodicy. A term used first by *Leibniz* to characterize the philosophical or rational demonstration of the existence of God and of the manifestations of His being and essence in the created universe (*natural theology*). In a more restricted sense the term denotes the philosophical attempt to justify God's infinite wisdom and goodness in view of the phenomena of physical, intellectual, and moral evil.

Transcendent, Transcendental. Denotes (*a*) that which "transcends" all genera and species and which is therefore as universal as "being as such" (transcendentals: the true, the good, the one); (*b*) that which lies outside and beyond experience, in contrast to that which is "immanent" in experience. In Kant's terminology the adjective "transcendental" denotes something which is prior to all experience (*a priori*). In this sense knowledge is referred to by him as transcendental when it deals with the preconditions which make experience possible, i.e., with the *a priori* forms of sensitive apperception and "understanding" (*Verstand*).

Transcendental Idealism. See Idealism.

Universals. Ideas or generic concepts whose contents can be predicated in the same sense ("univocally") of all individual members of a class or genus. The epistemological controversies concerning the nature of universals (especially in the twelfth and fourteenth centuries) were consolidated in the following three points of view: (1) *Platonic or extreme realism:* universal ideas (man, plant, animal, etc.) exist *separate* from the individuals of the class; (2) *Aristotelian or Thomistic* (*moderate*) *realism:* universal ideas exist *prior* to the individuals of the class (*ante res*) in the form of Divine Ideas in the Divine Mind, but they also inhere materially in the individuals (*in rebus*); (3) *nominalism:* universal ideas are mere arbitrary or conventional and meaningless words or labels, while real existence can only be predicated of individual things (Roscelin, Abelard, William of Occam, and all materialists and sensists of medieval and modern times).

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